



THE INDEPENDENT

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Grunt, grapple, groan: wrestling is back REVIEW FRONT



Give the poor spin-doctor a break COMMENT PAGE 3

The make-under: less slap, more style FASHION PAGE



IN THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW

Prescott: 'We must revive traditional Labour values'

THE DEPUTY Prime Minister, John Prescott, and the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, have forged a new alliance to reassert "traditional" Labour values in the wake of the resignation of Peter Mandelson.

BY PAUL WAUGH AND COLIN BROWN
were working closely to shift the focus of the Government. Mr Prescott said the controversy and media speculation surrounding the Mandelson affair had led them to realise Labour should concentrate more on "substance" than rhetoric.

market: "We have decided that public expenditure is there to uphold the economy in the traditional Keynesian way." The Deputy Prime Minister heaped praise on Geoffrey Robinson, the former paymaster-general, for his help in developing radical public-private sector partnerships and schemes to raise money for public transport from road pricing.

Coming 24 hours after the cabinet "enforcer", Jack Cunningham, told ministers to stop the feuding that was damaging the Government, Mr Prescott's words represent a reassertion of his authority as Deputy Prime Minister. It is known that he and Mr Brown are among several Cabinet ministers, including Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, and David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, alarmed by Mr Blair's forging of closer links with the Liberal Democrats and his desire to re-align the centre-left through electoral reform.

News of the new Cabinet axis was greeted with glee by the Tories, who said it proved Mr Blair had lost control of his ministers. John Redwood, shadow trade and industry secretary, said the Prescott-Brown partnership's stress on interventionism proved that the Government had not lost its old Labour instincts.

"The civil war is evidently hotting up. They are now introducing some ideology into what so far has just been intense personal loathing between the Chancellor and the Prime Minister. Clearly we are seeing old Labour trying to exploit the New Labour weakness following the resignation of Peter Mandelson. It's quite extraordinary."

A senior party source said the alliance was an attempt by Mr Prescott to help Mr Brown at a time when he was under intense pressure to fire his spin doctor, Charlie Whelan, following the Mandelson resignation.

"This is certainly significant. Gordon and John are using the opportunity of Peter's departure to say that not everything he did was on target and we need to shift things. A lot of the party would agree," the source said.

But a senior Liberal Democrat said the alliance was a distraction from the Government's reforming agenda. "Tony should come back from holiday with his sun-tan and bang all their heads together."

Four die in failed Yemen rescue bid

THREE BRITONS and an Australian died yesterday when Yemen security forces stormed a building in which 16 holiday-makers were being held hostage by Islamic fundamentalists. The Yemenis staged the rescue attempt in spite of a British request that force should not be used, but officials in Aden said they took the military option only when the kidnappers began killing their prisoners. The attack came as the bodies of three British telecommunications workers murdered by their kidnappers in Chechnya were flown home.

BY STEVE BOGGAN
The hostages - six British women, six British men, two American women and two Australian men - were taken on Monday when their five-car convoy was ambushed by 18 kidnappers armed with Kalashnikov rifles and bazookas near Mawdiyah, 175 miles south of the capital Sanaa.

put the hostages' lives at risk." But more than 200 soldiers were already in place around the hostages' hideout in an area known as al-Wade'a, 250 miles south of the capital. According to the Yemenis, the kidnappers were attacked when they began shooting the hostages.

An unnamed Yemeni official told Reuters news agency: "The operation started after abductors started killing hostages... They killed two, and then our forces stormed them to prevent an escalation of the situation and the killing of more hostages." Two of the kidnappers were killed and four taken prisoner.

Last night, the survivors were recovering from their ordeal in the Movenpick Hotel in Aden. David Pearce, deputy head of mission at the British Embassy, said: "They are obviously in a state of severe shock, and I mean severe shock."

The Foreign Office was in a state of confusion last night, unable to confirm the numbers killed or to elaborate on the operation. Officials said Mr Henderson was forced to seek a second meeting with the Interior Minister when news of the killings emerged, but they were unable to say what he was told.

Explore Worldwide, the company with whom the hostages were travelling, said it had followed Foreign Office guidelines "to the letter". It said it would suspend all trips to Yemen for the time being.

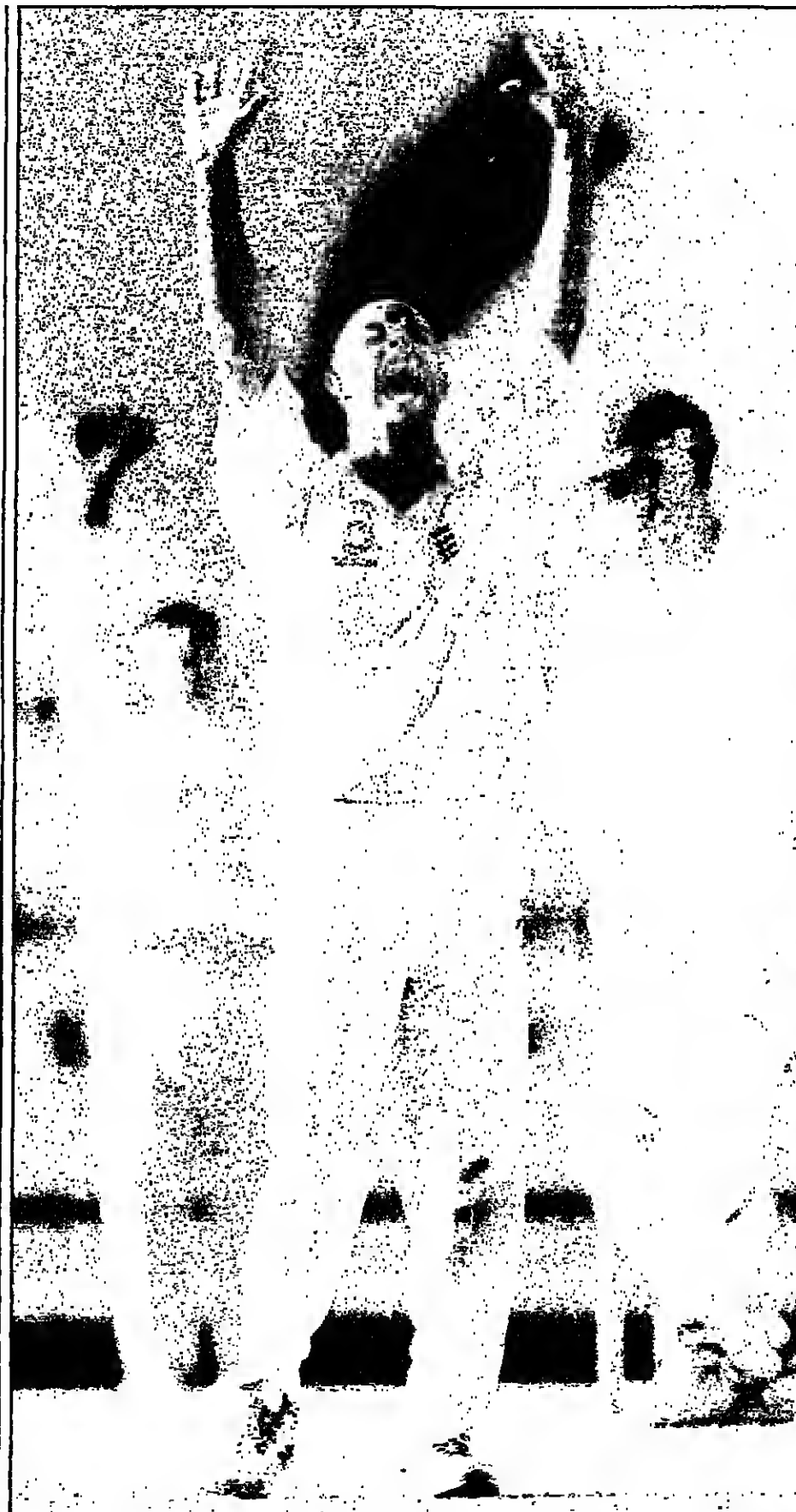
More than 100 Westerners have been kidnapped in Yemen since 1992 but almost all have been released unharmed.



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day morning, the Yemenis said they knew of their whereabouts. At 11am GMT, Victor Henderson, the British ambassador, met General Hussein Mohammed Arab, the Yemeni Interior Minister, and urged him to desist from the use of force.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "The ambassador made it clear to the Yemeni authorities that no violence should take place and that no rescue attempt should be made that



Dean Headley claims one of his six wickets in Melbourne Jack Atley/Allsport

Nation bowled over as England win at cricket

THE ASHES may appear to be on permanent loan to Australia, but England have at last done the decent thing and won a Test match. Australia began their second innings yesterday needing 175 runs for victory in the fourth Test but, in a dramatic final session, England took eight wickets for 59 to win by 12 runs. The collapse was largely instigated by Dean Headley who finished with 6-60.

Judging by the scenes at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, awash with legions of flag-waving supporters, anyone would have thought something bigger was afoot, but the victory will have done wonders for England's flagging morale.

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British seabirds living to be 100 years old



FORGET THE wise old owl. Evidence is growing that some British seabirds may live up to 100 years, one of Britain's leading bird experts said yesterday. Recoveries of ringed birds indicate great longevity in species such as the fulmar, gannet, manx shearwater and storm petrel, said Chris Mead, of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).

Fulmars have already been shown to live to more than 40 years, and gannets to 36. But because of their slow breeding rate, some fulmars in old colonies, such as St Kilda off the Scottish coast, may have chalked up a century.

There is no proof yet because leg-rings strong enough to last that long have only been in use for 30 years. But, Mr Mead said: "If I had to lay odds, I'd say it would be very unlikely there wasn't a 100-year-old fulmar, or a few of them, in the St Kilda colony, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if it was the same for the gannet."

The BTO's latest five-year report on the recovery of ringed birds shows a number of longevity records for waders and seabirds, including 18 years for the ringed plover, 26 for the bar-tailed godwit and 33 for the common tern - all proved from recoveries made in 1996.

In the five years to 1998, storm petrels have been shown to live to at least 32 years. Manx shearwaters to 35, gannets to 36 and fulmars to nearly 41.

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Prescott bins the spin for real policies

THERE WAS a crisis in the Prescott camp this week. The Deputy Prime Minister and former Cunard steward was entertaining some of his old shipmates at his grace and favour flat in Admiralty House when his cooker broke.

Compared to catering for 13 people with no power, dealing with Peter Mandelson's resignation was plain sailing for the former merchant seaman.

John Prescott made it clear in interviews last week that he would not be rushing to welcome back Mr Mandelson to the Cabinet. He had even referred to the row between Mr Mandelson and Gordon Brown as the "cancer at the heart of it all", in remarks which were wrongly assumed to refer to Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor's spin doctor.

Far from attacking the Brown camp, Mr Prescott has been busy this week - while Mr Blair is on holiday - consolidating an alliance with the Chancellor that could fill the vacuum left by Mr Mandelson at the heart of the Blair government.

Mr Prescott told *The Independent* that he wanted to steer the Government away from spin

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

and back to the delivery of policies. "We need to get away from rhetoric and back onto the substance of government," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister is intent on a new style of interventionism, which challenges the free-market tone of the competition White Paper published by Mr Mandelson weeks before his resignation.

"There is still an argument for industrial reorganisation. I still think there is a role for intervention - it's not like the 60s and 70s... Now we are active participants."

The alliance between Mr Brown and Mr Prescott will surprise many who believed they had a long-running feud as bitter as that between the Brown and Mandelson camps.

With the Chancellor, Mr Prescott is seeking a "cadre" of business expertise to put together more private finance for public sector schemes. Some may be startled by his support for big business, but he heaped praise on Geoffrey Robinson, the ex-paymaster-general also

forced to resign over his £373,000 loan to Mr Mandelson, for acting as the "midwife" bringing in private finance to public transport schemes.

The Chancellor and the Deputy Prime Minister could be accused of trying to turn back the clock to old Labour policies while the Blairites are off-guard over the resignation of Mr Mandelson, one of the key architects of New Labour.

But Mr Prescott rejected the notion, and insisted that Mr Mandelson's departure was not as significant as it had been claimed in the press. "I don't think that one individual has that kind of influence," he said.

Referring to Mr Blair's determination to carry on with the New Labour project, Mr Prescott made it clear he regards the "project" as Labour's manifesto programme.

"The project is to do what we said we would do when we came into office, which is to have a fairer Britain and a better Britain. I don't think any government has done more than we have done in 18 months."

In opposition, there was almost open warfare between



John Prescott: 'We need to get away from rhetoric and back on to the substance of government'

David Rose

Mr Prescott and the Brown camp as he tried to challenge for control of economic strategy. Mr Prescott decided in the run-up to the General Election that there was more to be gained from an alliance.

"There is a myth that Gordon and I don't get on. There was the early days in opposition where of course we were in conflict, and there was a speech in

which I said he was trying to dominate everything. That was seen as an attack. Since then... many of the things I am trying to do couldn't have been done without Gordon - and not necessarily with the agreement of the Treasury."

Treasury officials "bitterly resisted" the deal in which Mr Prescott will be allowed to earmark money raised from tolls

or congestion charging on motorists for enhanced public transport. In spite of scepticism, Mr Prescott insisted the money raised from motorists would go on public transport, because he has to vet the schemes.

"That was between Gordon and I. These are radical changes in the public finances. Brown is a radical guy in these areas," Mr Prescott said. "Our

relationship is excellent and has been for quite a while. There is less tension between us because it's quite clear I need to get some of the changes in the financial rules to be able to deliver - and it helps Gordon on the public finances by avoiding more public borrowing."

That deal has turned Mr Prescott's massive department of Environment, Transport and

the Regions into Whitehall's first tax raising ministry apart from the Treasury. "Because of its size and breadth... it's becoming a very important economic department, which is not realised by people," Mr Prescott said. "We are a massive deliverer, particularly when we have decided that public expenditure is there to uphold the economy in the traditional Keynesian way."

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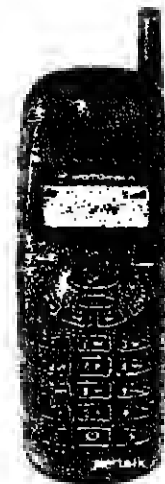
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MPs watchdog turns sights on ministers

PARLIAMENT'S anti-sleaze commissioner has revealed that she could take on new powers to police ministers in the aftermath of the Mandelson affair.

Elizabeth Filkin, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, suggested yesterday that ministers should come under the same scrutiny mechanism as backbench MPs.

Ms Filkin's remarks are the clearest sign yet that the whole system of policing ministerial misconduct is set for reform in the light of Peter Mandelson's undeclared £373,000 loan from the former paymaster-general, Geoffrey Robinson.

At present, the commissioner can only launch inquiries into MPs who fail to detail gifts and directorships in the register of members' interests. The power to investigate breaches by ministers is held by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary.

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair is under pressure from MPs on all sides to change the system. Many want the UK to follow the lead of the United States and several European countries where governments are not allowed to carry out investigations into their own members.

Ms Filkin told BBC Radio 4's *World At One* that she believed the Neill Committee on Standards in Public Life was right to examine the regulation of ministers. "It may be that it would be a better arrangement to have investigations - when they are needed - to cover both MPs and what they do in relation to the House of Commons and indeed, what they do if they happen to be in ministerial positions."

Ms Filkin's remarks were welcomed by leading members

of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, who also called for independent scrutiny of ministers.

Dale Campbell Savours, MP for Workington and a member of the committee, said that the proposal was "the only way forward". He added: "We just can't have prime ministers put in the position where they are asking questions about the private lives and affairs of fellow ministers. It can only be done by an independent body answerable to Parliament."

Rhodri Morgan, chairman of the Commons Public Administration Committee, agreed that extending the watchdog's remit would end the current "farce".

Ms Filkin's predecessor, Sir Gordon Downey, has described the omission of powers to regulate ministers as a "gap" in his remit. The Neill Committee will examine the issue next year.

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Woodward lawyer accuses brother

BY DAVID USBORNE AND
ESTHER LEACH

MORE THAN a year after a Massachusetts jury convicted the British au pair, Louise Woodward, of murdering Matthew Eappen, the baby in her care, one of her defence lawyers has suggested that the head injury that caused the child's death might have been inflicted by his elder brother.

In a startling interview with *Lawyers Weekly*, Harvey Silverglate conceded that Woodward's defence team made a mistake by not trying to implicate somebody else in the crime.

"In retrospect, we would have tried it differently," he said. He also revealed that while they maintained a calm demeanour in public, Woodward's parents were "hysterical" about their daughter's plight.

Specifically, Mr Silverglate, who led Woodward's defence with his law firm partner, told the American legal journal that they had "some stuff" that would have called into question the conduct of other members of the Eappen family, including the brother, Brendan.

"We didn't cast any aspersions, any hlemishes on the Eappens. That was our plan. We had loads of witnesses prepared to do it," Mr Silverglate



Harvey Silverglate: Brendan is a 'wild child'

said. "I can tell you that we had some stuff, and I'm not going to tell you what it was ..."

He added: "The issue of whether the older brother is well-behaved or not, well, that's relevant."

Mr Silverglate made the comments after being named one of the top 10 lawyers in Massachusetts by *Lawyers Weekly*. They are doubly controversial because they come on the eve of the civil trial in the case, which is scheduled to begin in Boston next week.

It could result in Woodward, on the basis of her manslaughter conviction, being ordered to pay tens of millions of dollars in damages to the Eappens.

Last night, Steve Collins, a Woodward family friend, said

neither Louise or her parents would comment. But he added: "It was a lawyer's comment in a lawyers' magazine meant purely for the professionals. It was an argument at the back of our minds at the time of the criminal case, but I believe that Louise's lawyers played it right."

"They were sensitive to how a jury might react to big lawyers blaming a young baby for the death of his brother. Maybe they could have placed the idea in the minds of the jury, but they decided to defend Louise rather than to attack the Eappen family, which I think was the right thing to do."

The latest revelation could encourage Woodward's lawyers to stage a more vigorous defence at the civil trial and use it, effectively, to retry the entire case and attempt once more to prove her innocence.

Frederic Ellis, who will represent the Eappens in that trial, called the remarks "totally improper". He said: "The Eappen family has suffered enough. They certainly don't need these aspersions cast on them."

Wendy Murphy, a former

public prosecutor in Massachusetts also lashed out at Mr Silverglate. "He should be named top-10 scumbag of the year. It's one thing to point the finger at an innocent person as a matter of strategy during a trial, but to do something so cruel after the fact is absolutely outrageous."

While there were rumours during the trial that Woodward's lawyers were ready to shift the blame on Brendan, who was two at the time, they demurred for fear of antagonising the jury. They relied on their central contention that Matthew died not from a violent shaking but from a minor, three-week-old injury that left a blood clot which eventually exploded catastrophically inside his skull.

Mr Silverglate refused to clarify yesterday what evidence he might have presented to implicate Brendan. He simply told *Lawyers Weekly*: "We possibly made a mistake not bringing out that the parents were imperfect, that the older brother was imperfect. The older brother in fact was quite a wild kid."



Sunil Eappen, carrying baby Matthew on his back, and his wife Deborah, holding Matthew's brother Brendan. One of Louise Woodward's defence team has suggested that Brendan may have caused Matthew's death

Heads seek term-time holiday ban

HEAD TEACHERS today called for a change in the law to stop parents taking their children on holiday during term time, which is happening more often.

The National Association of Head Teachers said rising divorce rates meant children often took two holidays, one with each parent. It also blamed work pressures, which meant parents took holidays at employers' convenience, and an increase in the number of families taking two holidays a year.

In addition, some ethnic minority families visited Pakistan, India or the Caribbean in November and December or between January and March.

David Hart, the association's general secretary, said: "The law permits pupils 10 days' authorised absence per school year, but parents are increasingly taking advantage by treating this as a right."

"It is wrong that parents cannot, or will not, find time for holidays within the existing 14-week 'envelope'. The travel industry's promotion of cheap family holidays in term time is a major contributory factor."

"The law is out of date and totally at odds with the Government's drive to raise standards," He added that parents

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

were increasingly ignoring schools' requests not to take their children on holiday during term, meaning children might miss national curriculum tests and fall behind with vital work. One secondary school had recorded more than 1,000 days lost to holidays last year.

The Department for Education and Employment is holding talks with the travel industry about the problem.

A spokeswoman for the Association of British Travel Agents said: "Tour operators are not actively promoting cheap family holidays in term time. They are simply in the brochures at different prices."

"It is a question of supply and demand; the six weeks of the summer holiday tend to be when most people want to go."

Margaret Morrissey, press officer for the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations, said the Government attitude was contradictory. It allowed parents to take children out of school for two weeks a year, but then penalised schools by including these absences in the league tables.

Christmas sales soar on Internet

INTERNET COMMERCE, still in its infancy in Britain, is exploding in America. Sales of goods over the Internet this Christmas were three to four times up on last year, according to preliminary figures.

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Shop.org, the electronic retailers' industry group, estimated that revenue for the holiday season grew 230 per cent, with the average amount spent rising to \$55. The Interpublic Group of Companies, an advertising group, estimated that online Christmas sales would reach \$5bn, four times higher than in 1997.

While this is still a tiny per-

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

centage of all shopping, it marks something of a milestone, according to firms that monitor online shopping.

"This holiday season marks the year that online retailing moved from an interesting consumer experiment to an accepted retail alternative," said BCG's vice-president, David Pecaut. "The 24-hour-a-day access to Internet stores, no crowds and the convenience of shipping gifts directly to family and friends have struck a chord with a rapidly growing segment of wired consumers."

IN BRIEF

Bomb attack on Catholic family

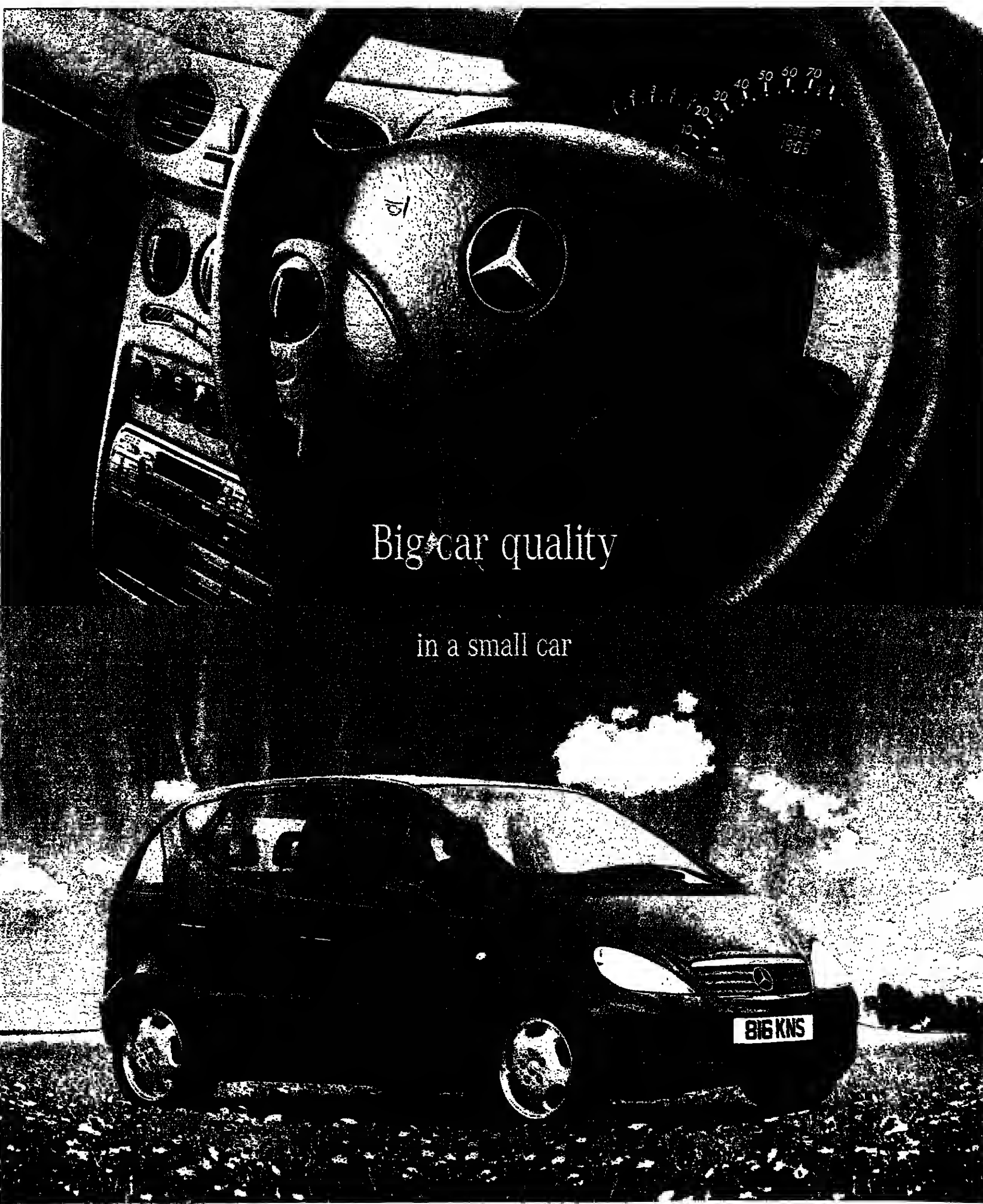
LOYALISTS WERE being blamed yesterday for a bomb attack on a Catholic family in Armagh on Monday night. A blast bomb shattered the window of Kay O'Connor's home, showering her with glass. She and her three children, who were in bed, were unharmed.

50,000 free nursery places

AN EXTRA 50,000 free nursery places for three-year-olds will be available next year, the Government announced yesterday. It is committed to double the proportion of three-year-olds with nursery places by 2002.

Huge leap in rail fares

SOME TRAIN fares are set to rise by up to 24 per cent. Save Our Railways said yesterday. The pressure group found that half of unregulated fares go up on 4 January, including the London to Birmingham first-class return, which rises 23.5 per cent.



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Police criticised over use of batons

POLICE CHIEFS were urged yesterday to abandon the use of "aggressive" American-style tactics when training their officers to use batons.

A report by the Independent Police Complaints Authority also expresses concern that British officers are being taught to strike people on their kneecaps and shins, despite those spots being particularly vulnerable to fractures.

The organisation warns that the use of these tactics may be responsible for a rise in the number of complaints about batons. A study - *Striking the Balance* - into the use of new types of police baton follows a 10 per cent increase in the number of complaints - up to 454 - in the past year. In its report, published today, the PCA calls for greater use of refresher training for officers, which appeared to be very effective in reducing complaints.

Batons began to replace 11-inch wooden truncheons - first issued to police in the last century - about five years ago. The PCA found that most complaints were associated with side-handled batons - the longest and heaviest of the types in use, and deployed in 23 forces across England and Wales. These attracted an average of 3.3 complaints per 1,000 officers used them.

It also raised particular concern about the Asp baton - an expandable wand with a metal tip, used by 12 forces, which was introduced from the US with hardly any changes to the training manual.

One consequence of this was that officers were trained to stand ready to strike with the baton resting on the shoulder, which put the suspect at risk of being hit, unintentionally, on the head or another dangerous

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

area. The Asp attracted 2.38 complaints per 1,000 officers. Peter Moorhouse, chairman of the PCA, said: "Police forces should amend their American batons training manuals to take account of the less aggressive style of policing in this country and provide refresher training for all officers."

The equipment receiving fewest complaints was used by only a handful of forces: the Casco type, used by five forces, which attracted 1.9 complaints per thousand officers; and the fixed-length Arnold, used by four forces, including the Metropolitan Police, with 1.78 complaints.

The report also urged police to rethink the areas of the body which were considered target areas. It expressed particular concern that the shin, which could be fractured, was a primary target area and the kneecap, which could be dislocated or fractured by a baton blow, was a secondary target area.

The new batons have been introduced along with rigid handcuffs, CS gas and body armour, to give officers greater protection. There were 15,488 assaults on officers in 1996-97.

The cases dealt with by the PCA include a police sergeant, found guilty in October of assaulting a man with an Asp baton. The officer, who had been called to a domestic incident, struck the man on the shoulder. The sergeant was convicted of assault and forced to resign. He plans to appeal.

In March, an 18-year-old man claimed he was struck on the head with an extendable side-handled baton as he walked away from a football ground. The officer faces a disciplinary hearing next month.



The Swanscombe skull yesterday going on display for two weeks at the Museum of London in the City. The fragments, which date from around 400,000BC and are from the oldest skull found in Britain, were uncovered near Dartford, Kent, in the Thirties and Fifties. **Brian Harris**

PR firm to boost lawyers' image

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

TIRED OF being the butt of endless dinner party jokes, the nation's solicitors have hired a team of spin doctors to get rid of their "fat cat" public image.

The Law Society, stung by government criticism of the legal aid earnings of top lawyers, has employed a London PR firm, Biss Lancaster, to persuade the public that solicitors are not greedy money-grabbers but champions of justice. Women's magazines, tabloid newspapers and daytime television programmes will be targeted.

A spokesman for the Law Society, David McNeill, said the profession was dogged by myths that lawyers increased acrimony in marital break-ups and other disputes as they sought to maximise their profits. He said: "These myths have existed since Shakespeare's time but they allow governments to get away with lawyer-bashing when they want to do things like cut legal aid. It's time to fight back."

During the recent debate on the future of the legal aid system, the Government was critical of lawyers' earnings, even "naming and shaming" those who made the most money from criminal legal aid cases. The Law Society called in PR consultants after a members' survey earlier this year revealed that solicitors believed they were held in low esteem.

Mr McNeill said: "The profession felt that its reputation was under pressure." He said the society's new president, Michael Matthews, recognised the need to improve the profession's image as part of a major reform programme.

Biss Lancaster will advise the society until next summer. Graham Lancaster, the PR company's chairman, said he aimed to make the Law Society "more effective in reacting to news" and "more focused in its messages". He will also seek to raise the profile of lawyers by making the public aware of the existence of legal activity in "almost all areas of British life".

Chefs in a stew over modified foods

BY SARAH WILSON

MANY OF Britain's leading chefs have agreed to banish genetically modified food from their kitchens and press the Government for a five-year moratorium on such foods being sold in shops.

Nico Ladenis and Raymond Blanc are among the 19 chefs who have agreed to back a Friends of the Earth campaign to halt the sale of genetically engineered food until more is known about its impact on health and the environment.

Pete Riley, a campaigner at FoE, said the people who cared most about food were nearly unanimous in their disapproval of scientific tinkering.

Shaun Hill, the chef and proprietor of the Merchant House restaurant in Ludlow, Shropshire, said: "It is the same sets of voices who gave us battery chickens in the name of cheap food that are now pushing genetic engineering. I'm very suspicious of their motives."

"There are just too many question marks hanging over this new technology. It is about time the Government learnt from the mistakes of the past and stopped people messing about with our food."

All the chefs who agreed to back the FoE campaign presided over restaurants who won the highest rating in this year's Good Food Guide. Among them was Waldow's, the restaurant at Cliveden, the stately home in Berkshire once owned by Waldorf Astor. Ian Samson, head chef at the adjoining Terrace restaurant, said the introduction of genetically modified food was a "frightening prospect" as the safety of the technology was unproven.

The Good Food Guide's editor, Jim Ainsworth, said: "To introduce 'experimental' herbicide-resistant, genetically modified, crops without some soundly based assurance is

madness, albeit perfectly legal. If BSE has taught us anything, it is surely to be cautious about tampering with natural processes, however well intentioned, however plausibly the benefits are packaged."

Philip Howard, the head chef at The Square restaurant in London, agreed: "It is only now that we are beginning to realise how using steroids, growth promoters and antibiotics has trashed the flavour of what we eat," he said.

Although genetically modified crops are not yet being grown commercially in the UK, such food is being sold in the high street shops and super-

markets. Safeway and Sainsbury's sell puree made from modified tomatoes grown in North America, said Mr Riley.

The alteration of foodstuffs and additives such as lecithin, a soya by-product which is used as an emulsifier in ice-cream and chocolate, was very difficult to detect, he added. Current legislation does not require manufacturers to label those products that contained certain modified ingredients.

It was ironic that the restaurants in the House of Commons had banned genetically modified food, yet the Government were still allowing it to be sold to the public, Mr Riley said.

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COUNTDOWN TO THE EURO

Blair treads softly on new currency

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

"WE HAVE to fight back against all this nonsense," Tony Blair told one of his closest advisers as he surveyed another day of damaging headlines about how an EU-wide tax policy was going to be imposed on Britain.

According to aides, the Prime Minister recognised that his twin-track strategy of appeasing Britain's Eurosceptic newspapers while the Government adopted a pro-European policy was no longer tenable.

"He finally realised that we were not going to get anywhere in Europe unless we took on the Europhobe press," said a government source. "For him it was a very serious moment."

A referendum on whether Britain should join the single currency is still some years away, but the starting gun for the campaign will be fired on 1 January when the euro is launched by 11 other European Union countries.

The "yes" and "no" camps already exist in embryonic form and they agree that 1999 could

THE PROS



Leaders: The all-party European Movement (Giles Radice, Labour MP); Lord Hollick, newspaper proprietor (left); Kenneth Clarke, former Tory chancellor; Peter Mandelson, former cabinet minister; Paddy Ashdown
Position: Want early declaration by the Government that it intends joining single currency
Strengths: Strong all-party base; business back-up
Weaknesses: Tony Blair reluctant to come off fence
Prospects: Will run disciplined campaign; successful euro launch would strengthen position

THE ANTIS



Leaders: Baroness Thatcher; William Hague; European Foundation (Bill Cash, Tory MP); European Research Group (Sir Michael Spicer, Tory MP); Democracy Movement (Paul Sykes, businessman, left); Austin Mitchell (Labour MP); Business for Sterling (Lord Sirling)
Position: Divided between "never" and "not for two Parliaments" (Hague)
Strengths: Will play on people's EU doubts; backers' money
Weaknesses: Thirty-plus groups
Prospects: May be battling against tide of history

THE 'NOT YETS'



Leaders: Lord Owen (left, former Labour foreign secretary and SDP leader); Lord Prior (former Tory cabinet "wet"); Martin Taylor (former chief executive, Barclays Bank)
Position: Britain should not join euro now, but still play a positive role in the EU
Strengths: Cannot be tarnished as anti-European; respected group of elder statesmen
Weaknesses: Difficult message to project; must avoid looking like band of yesterday's men
Prospects: May be outflanked by "yes" and "no" campaigns

painting it as a federalist party which swallows all the medicine prescribed by Brussels.

The lesson of the 1975 referendum, when the British people voted by a margin of 2-1 to stay in the then Common Market, bodes well for the "yes" campaign. The "no" camp will try to prevent the debate being turned into one about Britain's engagement in Europe.

Although the "no" campaign will probably have more money at its disposal, it may suffer from internal differences. There are more than 30 organisations in the Eurosceptic camp. A more formal structure may be set up later this year, but one participant admitted: "It will be very difficult to get everyone to work together."

In contrast, the putative "yes" campaign is applying the "command and control" strategy which served Labour so well at the last general election.

What the public makes of the great euro debate is another matter. At present, they are "switched off". But they will certainly notice the frantic activity of the next six months.

be critical in shaping public opinion ahead of the referendum that Mr Blair is expected to call shortly after the next general election. The pace of the great debate will quicken in January when Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, publishes a national changeover plan setting out what steps Britain needs to take to prepare for euro entry.

Pro-euro businessmen and the Liberal Democrats hope Mr Blair will use the occasion to

change the Government's policy to one of "not if, but when" - in effect, a declaration. Yet Mr Blair is unlikely to harden the policy of the Government, which is committed to monetary union in principle but insists the key tests on whether to join will be economic. "There will be a more pro-European tone, but the policy won't change," one minister said.

Nevertheless, supporters of a single currency concede the

Prime Minister is edging slowly in their direction: they welcomed his fightback against the Eurosceptic press during the recent controversy over a common EU tax policy.

Some businessmen are sceptical about the Prime Minister's keenness to take on such Eurosceptics as Rupert Murdoch, Conrad Black and Lord Rothermere.

Ministers close to Mr Blair believe, however, he has

crossed the Rubicon. "The Government's duty is to lead opinion, not follow it," said one.

Mr Blair knows that saying "yes" to the euro now would provoke divisions in the Cabinet and the Labour Party. He is attracted by a "slowly, slowly" strategy in which public hostility to the euro dissipates after a successful launch. Keeping his options open will allow Mr Blair to argue that opponents of the euro could safely

vote Labour at the next general election, knowing they could then vote "no" in a referendum.

Another factor the Prime Minister would be considering is the elections to the European Parliament in June - a big test of public opinion. The Tories will fight strongly on European issues. William Hague needs to make big gains to bolster his position as Tory leader, and his allies believe he can unite his party around his policy of ruling

out single currency membership during this Parliament and the next. The Tories should do well; the introduction of proportional representation will help them.

But the key question will be whether the pro-European heavyweights, like Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine, keep their heads down.

Labour will develop a "pro-Europe, but pro-reform in Europe" strategy, in the hope of preventing the Tories from

Britons expect to join euro

DESPITE CONTINUED widespread opposition to the euro, a clear majority believes that Britain will join eventually.

At the beginning of this month, a poll found 53 per cent of Britons would vote against joining if a referendum were held now. Only 29 per cent would vote in favour while the rest said they did not know.

But yesterday, a Gallup poll showed that four-fifths of the electorate believed it was inevitable that Britain would join the euro "sooner or later".

Equally, 58 per cent recently told ICM that Britain could not afford to stay out of the euro if it proved to be a success.

Moreover, there are clear signs of flux. Opposition rose after Britain was forced out of the euro's predecessor, the exchange rate mechanism (ERM), in 1992. And it ratcheted up again in the wake of the banning of British beef from European markets in 1996.

The same effect has been seen in recent weeks. When the spectre of European tax harmonisation was raised in November, opinion once again swung against the euro.

What the pro-single currency campaign needs is good news from Europe. Lower mortgage rates might, for example, prove an attraction; yet so far only one in ten of us recognise it as such.

And, of course, the pro-single currency campaign needs

BY JOHN CURTICE

the backing of the Government. Until recently, there were signs of a slow drift in favour of the euro.

A 27-point lead for opponents of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) just before last year's general election had dropped to 19 points by September. But that gain largely disappeared after the tax harmonisation row.

This Government makes rather friendlier noises about Europe than the previous Conservative one. But it will need a far more clear and sustained lead from ministers if public opinion is to be changed.

The Government, of course, will worry about the media. Yet whether individual newspapers have much influence on their readers is doubtful.

After all, readers of the largely pro-European Mirror are less keen on a single currency than are those of the Eurosceptic Daily Telegraph. What appears to matter is not how newspapers slant the news, but whether the news they have to report is good or bad for the single currency in the first place.

The challenge for those who wish to join the euro is to make sure the news is good.

John Curtice is deputy director of the ESRC Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends

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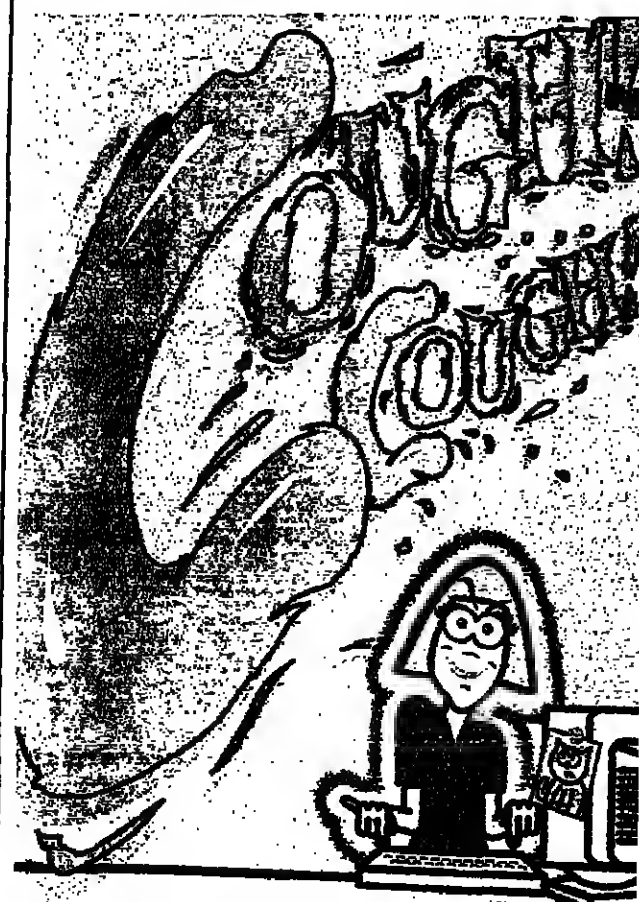
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Khieu Samphan (left) expressing his regret over the death of 2 million Cambodians, with fellow Khmer Rouge leader Nuon Chea

Khmer Rouge leaders apologise

TWO LEADERS of the Cambodian Khmer Rouge said yesterday they were "very sorry" about the genocide of the 1970s although they refused to accept responsibility for the slaughter of about two million of their countrymen.

Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea were flown by helicopter from a former rebel stronghold

By KER MUNTITT
in Phnom Penh

to the capital Phnom Penh to surrender to the Prime Minister, Hun Sen, after he pledged they would not face trial for crimes against humanity.

They were asked by journalists, many of them Cambodians who lost family members, if

they felt remorse for causing the deaths of up to 2 million people.

"Yes, sorry, very sorry," Khieu Samphan said. "We would like to apologise and ask our compatriots to forget the past so our nation can concentrate on the future," he said.

"Let bygones be bygones." After the Khmer Rouge revolutionaries emerged victorious

in a civil war in 1975 they forced the population into slave labour camps. One Cambodian in five perished from overwork, starvation, disease and executions.

The Khmer Rouge and their chief, Pol Pot, were overthrown in 1979 by the Vietnamese, but spent the next two decades fighting on in the countryside.

Survivors of the "killing fields" yesterday dismissed the apology. Bun Sray, 38, a civil servant, said: "Millions of lives, including 30 of my relatives, were lost under their regime. Now I want to kill their wives and children and then say sorry."

Keo Rotana, 45, said: "More than 10 of my family were killed in their regime and Khieu Samphan says sorry." (AP)

Saddam puts pressure on no-fly zones

SADDAM HUSSEIN yesterday stepped up his goading of the United States and Britain as part of an apparent strategy to provoke further military action against him and thus build up sympathy for Iraq's plight in the outside world.

A day after US jets attacked an Iraqi air defence installation which had earlier fired missiles against them in the northern "no-fly" zone, Baghdad's Vice President said Iraq would continue to fire at aircraft entering the zones in the country's north and south.

He claimed Iraq's planes were operating once more in the two areas, in defiance of the Allied ban. "We are doing this right now," Iraqi planes are, in effect, flying in a normal fashion in Iraqi air space," Taha Yassin Ramadan said last night, underlining how Iraq has never recognised the two zones. This constitutes the first breach of the "no-fly" regimes since 1996.

The first zone was imposed in 1991 to protect the Kurdish population in the north, the second a year later to safeguard Shia Muslims in the south.

This latest defiance, less than two weeks after the end of the American and British air

By RUPERT CORNWELL

strikes, is generally seen as another ploy to present Iraq as the victim of bullying by Washington and London, and to bolster President Saddam's case for a lifting of United Nations sanctions. But his adversaries were not rising to the bait.

The Pentagon said US overflights, suspended yesterday because of bad weather, would resume when conditions improved. British officials said: "It is not out of character for Saddam to try and provoke". Both countries rejected Iraqi claims, repeated yesterday, that one Western plane had been shot down during the earlier attacks, in which four Iraqi soldiers are said to have been killed.

However, if Baghdad is seeking to rebuild support in Arab capitals, it is going about it in a strange way. The Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, lashed out at the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak for blaming Iraq rather than the US for the four days of air attacks before Christmas.

In another setback for Iraq, a meeting of Arab foreign ministers set for today, which might have criticised the military

strikes and recommended that Arab countries ignore international sanctions, was postponed until 24 January. Among the Arab countries, only Libya has come out unequivocally in support of Iraq.

Neither is the ineffective helping Iraq's attempts to exploit the split among UN Security Council members on how to handle President Saddam.

France, which broadly supports a lifting of sanctions, has drawn Iraq's fire by suggesting that the spending of oil income should be permanently monitored by the UN to prevent Baghdad using the money to buy arms.

Lately there have even been hints from Iraqi officials of an end to the oil-for-food programme, which allows Iraq to sell up to \$5.25bn of oil every six months for essential food and medical supplies. Iraq claims it cannot sell that amount of oil because of low oil prices and a ban on purchases of equipment to maintain the fields.

Britain and the US say President Saddam is deliberately under-using the programme but, none the less, they have made a proposal to broaden the scheme.

Sierra Leone town falls to rebel army

REBEL FORCES in Sierra Leone fighting to oust President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah have taken control of the central town of Makeni, observers said yesterday. The strategic town, 75 miles north-east of the capital, Freetown, was the scene of recent heavy fighting.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels forced a West African peace-keeping force to retreat from Makeni, triggering the flight of the town's entire population of several thousand.

The RUF has launched a series of offensives in recent weeks to recapture ground lost to the Nigerian-led peacekeepers earlier in the year.

Diplomats from West Africa, the United States and Britain, meeting on Monday in the Ivory Coast capital of Abidjan, called for more aid to help defend Sierra Leone's embattled government.

Nigeria has assumed the

By JAMES ROBERTS

majority of responsibilities for the peace-keeping force, known as Ecomog. The US and Britain have provided logistical support for the regional task force.

Rebel units claim to have come within 12 miles of the capital and have threatened to start shelling the city. Sierra Leone claims that mercenaries from Liberia, Burkina Faso and Ukraine are fighting alongside the rebels, though that has not been independently confirmed.

Nigeria flew two more battalions to bolster its forces in Freetown on Sunday night. The peacekeepers are also expecting reinforcements from Gambia.

President Kabbah has offered to negotiate with the rebels but they have declined, claiming they will storm the capital unless he resigns. The fighting has forced most foreign nationals to leave the country.

New move to halt fighting in Kosovo

ABOUT A hundred observers were on their way to Kosovo yesterday to shore up efforts to control fighting in the Serbian province between the authorities and rebel Albanians.

Their arrival will boost the Kosovo mission to 700 people. A total of 2,000 are expected to be in place by mid-January, said a spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which runs the operation.

Violence last week around Podujevo, in the north of the province, almost shattered a US-brokered truce established in October. Yesterday Nato said it remained "ready to intervene" if violence intensified and demanded that both sides respect the informal truce.

A spokesman for the Kosovo Liberation Army said the rebels would respect the ceasefire, "but we will defend ourselves with all means if necessary". (AP)

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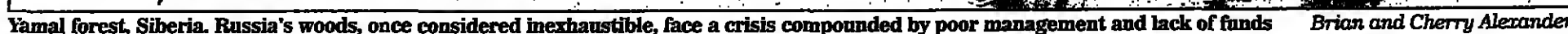
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SEIZING THE moment when Christmas trees are in the public consciousness, the Russian branch of Greenpeace has launched a campaign for more rational use of the forests that are potentially one of Russia's greatest assets.

BY HELEN WOMACK
in Moscow

trees much more cheaply but we are badly organised," said Igor Babanin, of Greenpeace. "The Danish farm their firs as the Dutch grow tulips. We do have a few evergreen plantations in the Moscow region but most Russians prefer to steal from nature than to buy."

At present they are wasted and the forestry industry joins most other sectors in depression and crisis. Absurdity begins at the Christmas-tree markets that have sprung up in Moscow and other cities so that Russians can take home the traditional *yolka* (fir) for New Year celebrations. The former Soviet Union occupies a sixth of the world's land surface and much is covered by evergreens. Yet the best-shaped firs at the Moscow market are from Denmark and cost \$50 (£31) a metre, a month's salary for the average Russian.

Last New Year, Igor patrolled commuter trains with forestry inspectors and fined citizens coming into town with illegally felled firs. "Most of the people were innocent. They had bought the trees from cowboy operators. They are the real menace. They go into the forests and cut down far more trees than are needed. Then, after New Year, piles of firs are left rotting in the streets."

The waste in the Christmas-tree trade is only part of the

story. The state, desperate for revenue, loses vast sums each year because of the way it taxes the forest industry. This month, Greenpeace activists tried to climb on to the roof of Rosleskhoz, the state organization that supervises the industry, to highlight the problem. But they were brought down by pistol-toting security guards.

In most countries, tax is paid when a tree is cut, regardless of how the wood is to be used. In Russia, the cutting goes untaxed, as dues are supposed to be paid later, when the wood is processed. Dishonest or financially strapped firms underestimate the amount of processing and less tax reaches the state coffers.

Timber is valued by the Finnish tax man at \$50 per cubic metre and even east European trees are worth \$10. But the cutting tax in Russia

is 50 cents per cubic meter. "It is a hangover from Communist times, when the blessing of nature were supposed to be free to Soviet man," said Alexei Yaroshenko, a Greenpeace biologist and forest expert. "But it makes no economic sense. Some members of the State Duma saw our protest on television and came to talk to us. They were working out the 1999 budget and were interested in our arguments."

In all likelihood, Russia's tax anomalies will be ironed out over time. If that was the only problem, Greenpeace could be confident. But the organisation is raising the alarm over the disappearance of the forests themselves.

"Russia is such a big country that we have believed its resources were infinite," said Mr Yaroshenko. "The truth is very different." Greenpeace is par-

ticularly concerned about what it calls ancient forests, in other words those that have never been touched by man. It is frightening how few are left.

In northern regions of Russia, such as Archangelstsk, Komi and Karelia, only 12 per cent of the woods have grown naturally for centuries, while the rest are "secondary forests", poorer woods growing where old trees were cut down. "If we continue logging at the present rate, all the ancient forests this side of Siberia will be gone in 10 to 15 years," said Mr Yaroshenko.

The consequences of forest loss in Russia, just as in the Amazon and other parts of the world, will be devastating. Not only do the original forests contain millions of types of flora and fauna but they also regulate the world's climate. When destroyed, they release huge amounts of carbon, which heats

up the atmosphere. Greenpeace says the remaining ancient forests should be left alone and secondary forests and plantations should be better managed. With recycling technology, there is no reason why forests that have grown for 1,000 years should be cut down to make toilet paper.

One piece of news inspires Greenpeace this holiday season. After seeing the organisation's satellite maps of the world's dwindling ancient forests, the Svetagorsk pulp and paper mill, run by Swedes on Russian territory, became the first in the world to pledge to stop using wood from such forests.

"It's a drop in the ocean, but it's a start," said Mr. Yaroshenko. "Go to your supermarkets and DIY stores and demand that the products they sell are not made at the cost of our last natural heritage."

AMERICAN TIMES
GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT

THEY HAVE been lying awake in Greenwich, Connecticut, scratching their well-groomed heads in search of a solution to the great millennium conundrum. Where to spend New Year's Eve 1999, now 12 months and a day away?

Forget what sport utility you park in your drive or which country club you frequent. In this town of conspicuous consumption, there is a new measure of success: what travel arrangements you have for the last days of next December.

My travel agent has had news. Making it to the mid-Pacific and those few spots on the International Dateline that would allow me to celebrate the dawning of 2000 twice will be impossible.

Tonga, just west of the dateline, has 700 hotel rooms, but all are taken. And I just know that one of my neighbours will be among the 88 lucky souls who have paid \$44,950 (\$28,100) for a seat on a jet chartered by an outfit called TCS Expeditions with a special schedule for the millennium. It will first deposit passengers on Tonga for the first few hours of 1 January 2000 before whisking them to Samoa, just east of the dateline, to see in the new year several hours later.

But wait. Perhaps I need go nowhere. Greenwich, it seems, will be throwing a bash of its own that will offer residents a chance to emulate what others will be trying in the Pacific. We also will be able to cheer in the millennium not once, hut twice.

True, a degree of suspension of disbelief will be required. It will work like this: this Greenwich will for one night bask in the millennial glory that will belong to that other Greenwich, the one across the pond from which

across the pond from which historically the world's time is measured. We will, in fact, pretend we are in the Greenwich of Wren and not in Connecticut. And why not? Greenwich, Connecticut, with

its watery situation and grand civic pretensions — its assembly of so-called “selectmen” is bigger even than the state legislature — has never been shy about its old-country associations. There are no buildings by Wren in the town, but even its local newspaper makes a nod towards time-keeping: it is called the *Greenwich Time* and its logo is a clock.

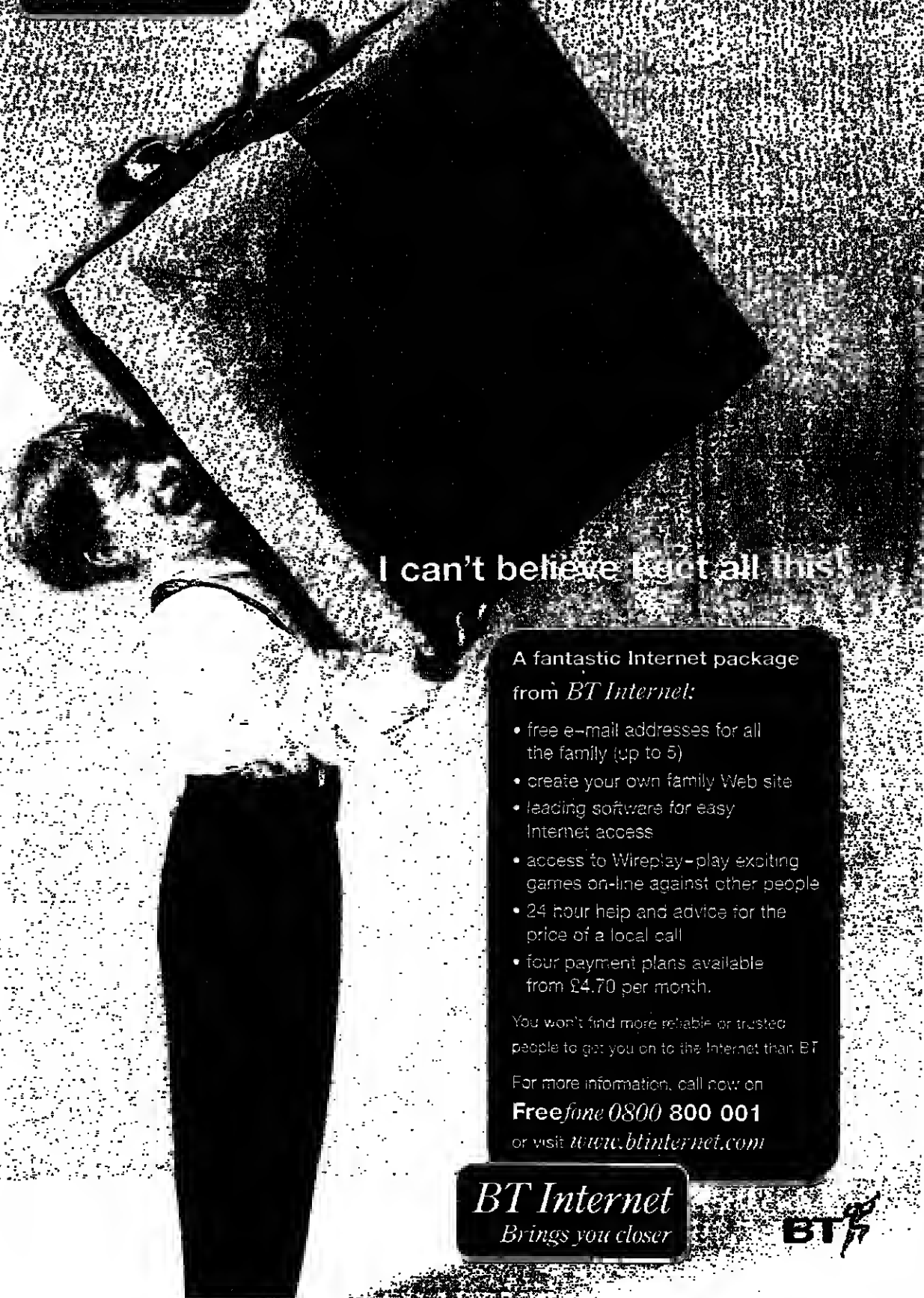
So, according to plans being laid by a body called the Greenwich 2000 Committee, the arrival of the new millennium will be celebrated here five hours earlier than anywhere else in the eastern United States. In other words, we will be free to pop our champagne corks at 7pm, when midnight will be striking at the Royal Observatory in London. Tom Ragland, our First Selectman, thinks this a grand idea. “This will give me and many other Greenwich residents the opportunity to ring in the millennium and then get to bed by 9 o’clock,” he said this week.

A variety of events are in the works: there will be exhibitions and lectures, and a mini-Stonehenge-like structure, representing a giant sundial, has been commissioned. The focus of the evening will be a party at the Hyatt Hotel, with huddle and squeak and warm beer. BBC coverage of events around midnight in Britain, including celebrations at the Dome and Observatory, will be beamed by satellite into the hotel and shown on giant screens in its ballroom.

All this was the brainchild of Ian Kerr, a Briton who has lived in Greenwich for 30 years and who heads the 2000 Committee. "Because of the name Greenwich and the name's association with time, we just said 'Let's do what they're going to be doing in Greenwich, England,'" he said. "We want to be able to say we were present there, when the new millennium hit the world".

DAVID USBORNE

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Business & City Editor, Jeremy Warner
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BUSINESS

Recession fears deepen as business failures increase

BRIEFING

NatPower pulls out of Polish deal

NATIONAL POWER yesterday said that a lack of financial guarantees had prevented it from signing a deal to take a 20 per cent stake in Polish state power complex PAK. "There were insufficient safeguards to make the investment," a National Power spokesman said. National Power had offered \$125m for the 20 per cent stake in a deal that was initially expected to be signed before Christmas. The spokesman said the deal could be revived only if Poland could provide reassurances on the structure of markets and returns for National Power. The British company is believed to want pricing guarantees and purchase agreements extending over the next five years. Poland's treasury ministry said last week that the deal founded after National Power presented additional conditions which were not part of the original agreement.

Bass chief receives 97% pay rise



SIR IAN PROSSER, chairman and chief executive of hewing group Bass, received a 97 per cent pay rise last year, which saw his annual pay packet soar to £1.6m. In addition to a basic £600,000 salary, Sir Ian (pictured) also received performance-related bonuses of £298,000, and options worth £17,000, the first tranche of shares in the long-term incentive plan. Sir Ian's pay rise compares with a 75 per cent rise in profits in the group's business.

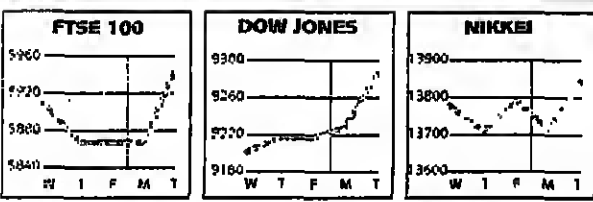
GEC narrows search for partner

GENERAL ELECTRIC Company yesterday confirmed it had narrowed its list of potential defence merger partners to four rival groups in Europe and the US. A spokeswoman confirmed reports that the shortlist included British Aerospace as well as US groups Lockheed Martin and Northrop and France's Thomson-CSF. "We have been holding discussions. We are now making a decision."

Centrica raises £92m cash

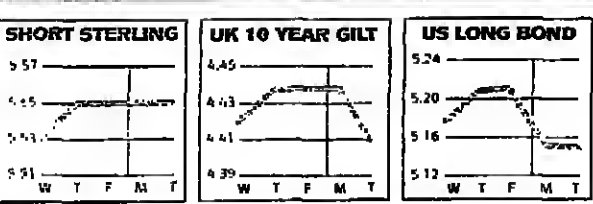
CENTRICA, the gas distributor, yesterday announced that it had raised £92m in cash through the lease and buyback of two gas platform topsides in the Irish Sea to Bankers Trust. The 20-year agreement, which will reduce 1999 financing costs by 2.7 per cent, will not affect Centrica's licence interests, gas production or reserves, the company said. At the close of trading, Centrica shares had gained 4 per cent to 122p.

STOCK MARKETS



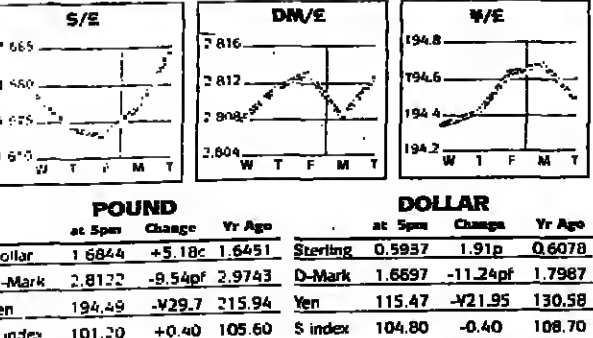
Index	Close	Change	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol
FTSE 100	5941.50	74.30	1.27	6183.70	4599.20
FTSE 250	4843.50	30.70	0.64	5970.90	4247.60
FTSE 350	2794.80	32.30	1.17	2969.10	2210.40
FTSE All Share	2693.99	30.24	1.14	2886.52	2143.53
FTSE SmallCap	2061.70	9.30	0.45	2793.80	1834.40
FTSE Fledgling	1143.50	7.70	0.68	1517.10	1046.20
FTSE AIM	757.30	5.20	0.66	1146.90	761.30
FTSE FLOO 100	1000.64	13.66	1.38	9390.20	7600.30
Dow Jones	9385.45	58.90	1.01	12352.95	12787.90
Nikkei	13846.90	137.84	1.01	12352.95	12787.90
Hang Seng	10225.97	55.83	0.55	11926.16	6544.79
Dax	5031.87	112.90	0.26	6217.83	3833.71

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	Yr chg	1 Yr	Yr chg	10 year	Yr chg	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	6.35	-1.32	5.68	-2.01	4.41	-1.79	4.31	-1.86
US	5.78	-0.63	5.15	-0.81	4.77	-1.55	5.15	-1.06
Japan	0.50	-0.27	0.58	-0.14	2.08	0.16	2.81	0.26
Germany	5.22	-0.42	3.20	-0.73	3.89	-1.37	4.79	-1.06

CURRENCIES



Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6844	+5.18c	1.6451	Swiss	1.6697	-11.24p	1.7987	Yen	194.49	-29.7	215.94
DM	2.8172	-9.54p	2.9743	Base Rates	6.25	7.25		Silver (\$)	4.92	0.01	6.24
Yen	194.49	-29.7	215.94								
Silver (\$)	4.92	0.01	6.24								

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	10.35	0.01	16.26	GDP	115.40	3.00	112.04	Dec			
Gold (\$)	287.75	0.70	390.75	RPI	164.40	3.00	158.61	Dec			
Silver (\$)	4.92	0.01	6.24	Base Rates	6.25	7.25					

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.6562	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14.89	Netherlands (guilders)	3.0674	New Zealand (\$)	3.0873
Austria (schillings)	19.13	Norway (krone)	12.43	Portugal (escudos)	276.92	Saudi Arabia (rials)	6.1081
Belgium (francs)	56.26	South Africa (rand)	9.4754	Spain (pesetas)	231.49	Sweden (krona)	13.29
Canada (\$)	2.5927	Switzerland (francs)	2.2327	South Korea (won)	166.82	Thailand (bahts)	56.62
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8040	Turkey (liras)	507.098	USA (\$)	1.6375		
Denmark (krone)	10.43						
Finland (markka)	8.2936						
France (francs)	9.1387						
Germany (marks)	2.7337						
Greece (drachma)	458.28						
Hong Kong (\$)	12.59						
Ireland (pounds)	1.0953						
India (rupees)	64.09						
Israel (shekels)	6.4843						
Italy (lira)	2710						
Japan (yen)	189.62						
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.1084						
Malta (lira)	0.6108						

YESTERDAY BROUGHT fresh gloom about the state of the economy, with news of the first rise in business failures for six years. But one employers' organisation warned business against talking itself into a recession in 1999.

The number of business failures climbed to 38,834 in 1998 from 36,368 in 1997, according to Dun & Bradstreet. This was the first increase since 1992, at the bottom of the last recession.

Philip Mellor, an analyst at the business information service, warned: "I see this trend continuing for the next six months." Interest-rate cuts should then start to take effect, he said.

Mathew Farrow, head of the Confederation of British Industry's small business unit, said the figures confirmed other signs of an economic slowdown.

CBI surveys have become markedly more pessimistic in recent months, and the organisation has called for further interest-rate reductions. But Tim Melville-Ross, director-general of the rival

BY DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Institute of Directors, yesterday warned against taking too gloomy a view. Business leaders were in danger of talking themselves into a recession in 1999, he said.

"Unfortunately, we are particularly good as a nation at persuading ourselves that the economic situation is worse than it is. But I firmly believe that business is capable of preventing a recession simply by avoiding talking about it as if it were inevitable," he said.

The CBI agreed that the level of business failures remained much lower than during the

last recession. The figure reached a peak of 62,767 in 1992. "This supports the view that although things may get worse, the downturn will not be as long or as deep as last time around," Mr Farrow said. The CBI has itself warned of the risk that recession could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Separate figures yesterday suggested that consumer spending and the housing market have continued to hold up well, despite signs that confidence about the economy's prospects is slipping. The Nationwide reported a

0.8 per cent rise in house prices in December, leaving the annual rate almost unchanged at 7 per cent. The building society said sales were 12 per cent down since the start of the year and confidence was weak.

But it predicted that the housing market was in a good position to weather an economic downturn. Some areas - such as Cambridge, Guildford and Islington in London - were still seeing annual price rises in excess of 20 per cent.

David Parry, head of planning at Nationwide, said: "The strength of household finances

will help the housing market weather any downturn." The British Bankers Association, whose members include 10 of the country's 15 biggest mortgage lenders, said their new lending to homebuyers was £1.1bn in November.

This was above October's £922m and above the recent monthly average - even though banks have been losing market share to the remaining building societies.

The BBA also reported a strong increase in credit card borrowing and personal loans, totalling £6.5bn, in November.

Wetherspoon to create 2,000 jobs

THE FAST-GROWING pub chain JD Wetherspoon defied fears of a recession and a share price collapse yesterday, announcing that it would create 2,000 new jobs in 1999.

It plans to spend £100m opening 80 new premises to add to the 306 it already owns. The new pubs will be sited in town and city centres.

The chairman Tim Martin, who founded the company 19 years ago, said: "Since we opened our first pub we have traded in good and had economic times and it hasn't made a lot of difference."

Between April and September this year its share price halved, and has shown little sign of recovering since. Yesterday the shares closed down 1p at 173.5p.

Even so, Mr Martin seems to have found a winning formula in the highly competitive and fast-changing market for Britain's pub drinkers.

While breweries are endlessly converting unfashionable and decaying licensed premises

BY NICHOLAS SCROON

into a bewildering variety of themed drinking dens, Wetherspoon rarely buys pubs.

Instead, it converts buildings such as banks, post offices and cinemas into large free houses and serves food in them all day as well as drink.

Music and television are banned (the latter even during the World Cup), as are karaoke and quiz nights. All its pubs provide non-smoking areas and closed-circuit television to deter crime.

The chain is also willing to price beer aggressively and indulge in loss leaders. Next month about half of its premises will be selling a leading bitter at 99p a pint. Last month it put large posters up in Calais, the home of cheap beer, advertising the fact that two of its pubs near Leeds would be selling John Smith's Yorkshire bitter at 50p a pint.

The new jobs, a mixture of full and part-time posts, will include managers, bar workers

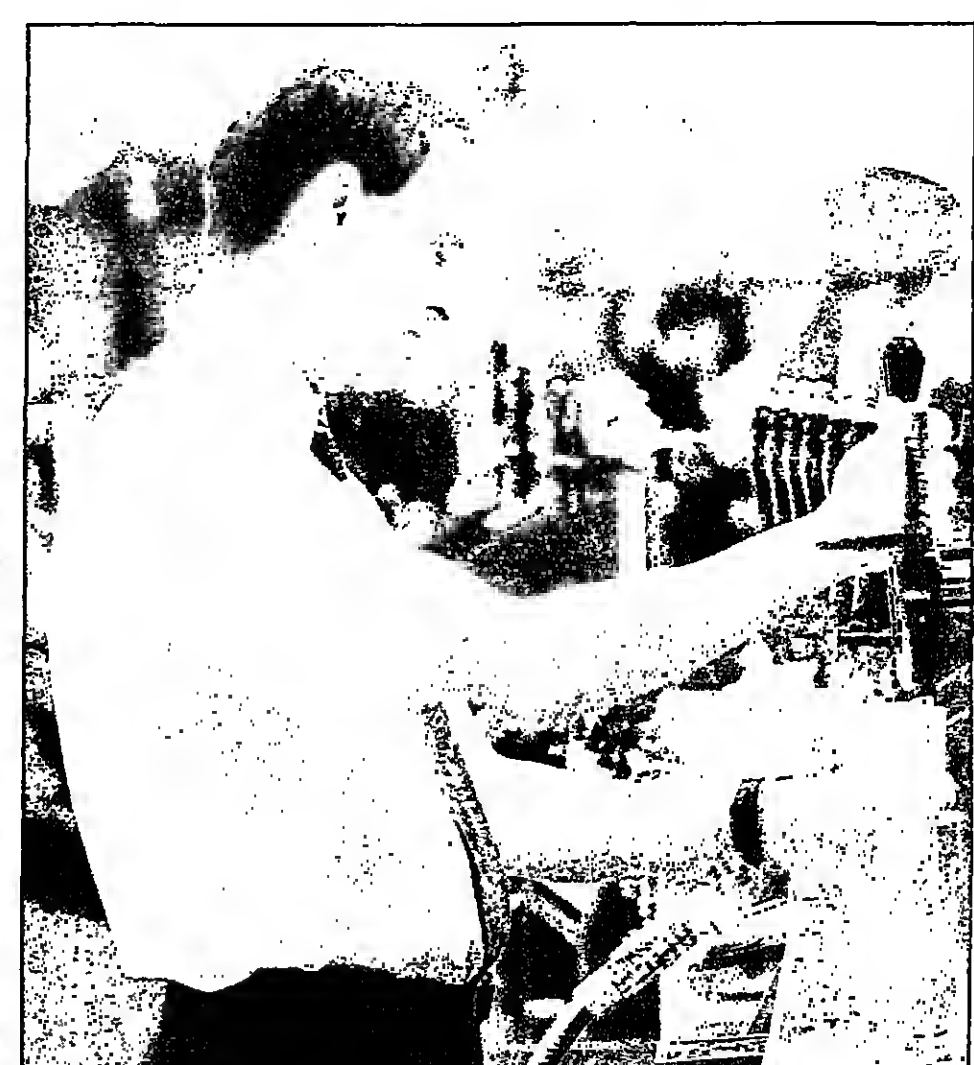
and kitchen staff. The chain currently employs 7,900 staff. Its new premises will be opening in towns and cities in England, Scotland and Wales.

Mr Martin, aged 43, started the business as a young law graduate from Nottingham university, when he sold a flat to finance the purchase of a single north London pub. He believes that Wetherspoon could more than triple in size to run over 1,000.

"He senses that a lot of rival pubs are not particularly good, and there are still plenty of towns where we've never been heard of," said company spokesman Eddie Gershon.

"Our [pubs] are clean, safe and straightforward and we welcome everyone, from students to pensioners."

But Wetherspoon's quest for new customers does not extend to what may be the most heavy drinking night in history - New Year's Eve, 1999. The company has already announced its pubs will shut at 8pm, allowing its staff to go off and celebrate.



Wetherspoon plans to spend £100m opening 80 new city centre pubs John Lawrence

Tarmac attacks AI over failed merger

TARMAC HAS launched a scathing attack on Aggregate Industries over the last-minute collapse of their £1.8bn merger earlier this month, accusing the building materials group of reneging on an agreement over the management structure of the enlarged construction group.

The attack by Sir Neville Simms, the construction giant's chief executive, comes as Tarmac clinches a £125m project under the Government's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to extend the A55 from Llanfair to Holyhead - the first privately-financed deal to be awarded in Wales.

The projects, won by a consortium including Tarmac, the contractor Laing and the consultant Hyder, is for the construction of 32km of dual carriageway. The consortium will design, build, finance and operate the road under the PFI - the Government scheme aimed at encouraging private firms to invest in public infrastructure projects.

In his first interview since the end of merger talks with AI

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

earlier this month, Sir Neville told *The Independent*: "Aggregate broke the negotiations by putting a hand grenade in the middle of the room and saying 'we are not going to abide by the written agreement'."

According to the agreement, Sir Neville would have become non-executive chairman of the enlarged group, with Peter Tom, AI's chief executive, as chief executive.

The two would also have co-chaired an integration committee to oversee the merger while membership of the board of the new company and the committee were to be split 50-50 between the two groups.

Sir Neville claimed AI demanded he relinquish his role as co-chair of the committee and wanted the majority of members on the integration committee and on the board.

"This was just ludicrous. In a merger, balance is the vital. Anything else is a takeover and for a takeover you have to pay a premium," Sir Neville said. He dismissed as "rubbish"

claims that the merger had foundered because of a clash of personalities between him and Mr Tom. "It doesn't make sense. I am the chief executive of a group that is bigger than Aggregate and I had already decided to become non-executive chairman," he said.

Sir Neville also rejected as "spurious" AI's argument that his position in the new company would have created a conflict of interest with his proposed role as head of Tarmac's construction division, which was to be spun off from the Tarmac-AI entity.

He said that following the merger's collapse, Tarmac has been in talks with a number of other parties.

The company's share price has been dogged by the presence of the low-margin construction division alongside the building materials unit and Sir Neville has been under pressure from City institutions to break up the group.

In the interview, he did not rule out a split, but said that a merger was still the "preferred option".

Market for new issues collapses

THE NEW issues market almost halved in value during the year, robbing many small companies of the chance to go public and raise capital, according to accountancy firm KPMG, writes Clifford German.

There were only 68 new issues in the whole of 1998, raising less than £3.9bn between them. This compared with 100 deals raising £8.7bn in 1997 and 218 deals raising £10bn in 1994.

The level of activity continued to decline into the fourth quarter, when there were only 14 deals, raising £147m.

"The new issues market virtually closed down at the end of July - after the sharp fall in the stock market - and there is no hint of an upturn on the horizon," said Neil Austin, head of new issues at KPMG corporate finance yesterday.

The desperate position of the new issues market, which also affects smaller quoted companies looking to raise more money through rights issues, is forcing smaller companies to resort to private equity or bank loans.

BP may shut down Ula field

BRITISH PETROLEUM may be forced to shut the Ula oilfield in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea because of low oil prices.

A temporary closure of the field, which produces 30,000 barrels of oil a day, is one of a number of options being considered in an attempt to cut costs, and a decision will be taken late next month or early in February, a spokesman said. BP is the lead operator in the Ula field with a 57.5 per cent stake.

The announcement yesterday is seen by oil industry sources as an attempt to put pressure on Statoil, the Norwegian state oil company, to cut its charges for transporting oil from Ula through the Statoil pipeline to the Ekofisk distribution platform where oil is loaded for shipment to refineries.

These charges are said to be as high as \$5 a barrel, according to unconfirmed reports in the Norwegian press. "We have had talks with Statoil and the matter is now with the Norwegian oil and energy ministry," a BP spokesman said.

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

If Ula is shut down BP will have to pay the costs of care and maintenance but Statoil's revenues will dry up immediately. Some of the 80 workers on the Ekofisk platform may also be affected, a spokesman for BP Norway said.

BP's other nearby North Sea oilfield, Gylde, which produces 40,000 barrels a day and has lower operating and transport costs, is not affected.

But other oilfield operators of marginal oilfields worldwide could be faced with similar choices if the downturn in crude oil prices shows no signs of being reversed in the next 12 months.

North Sea oil prices for delivery in February edged up 35 cents to \$10.46 a barrel yesterday, but the outlook remains depressed.

BP was the most actively traded stock on the London market yesterday and prices fell by 8.5p to 908.5p.

In New York shares in Halliburton, the world's largest oil service company, fell by \$2 after a profits warning.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

BLUE CHIPS failed to hold their levels but, in exceedingly thin trading, Footsie managed to close with a 74.3-point advance to 5,941.5.

The supporting indices also made progress. Futures activity was behind some gains and the usual plethora of New Year tips was another relevant factor. Asda, the superstores chain, remained under the influence of takeover rumours with the shares scoring a 4.25p gain to 163.25p as speculators banked on a bid from US retailing chain, Wal-Mart.

Derek Pain, page 13

NEW YORK

NEW YORK shares drifted upwards, as higher than expected holiday sales in the US compensated for a fall in Internet stocks. In early afternoon trading, the Dow Jones rose 0.3 per cent to 9,256, while the Nasdaq fell 0.25 per cent to 2,174.

Amazon.com, the online bookseller, fell 3.5 per cent, and Charles Schwab, the on-line brokerage, dropped 5.5 per cent as investors took profits after Monday's surge in Internet stocks.

TOKYO

A SURGE in on-line Christmas shopping in the US, coupled with a late flurry of futures trading, saw Japanese shares post their largest gain in four weeks yesterday, with the benchmark Nikkei index gaining 1 per cent to close at 13,846.

Computer stocks led the way, with Softbank, the software wholesaler which owns a stake in Internet directory Yahoo!, surging 6 per cent, and Fujitsu, Japan's biggest computer producer, adding 2 per cent.

FRANKFURT

DESPITE A lack of activity in the run-up to the euro, shares in German companies continued the upward trend of the previous four trading days, with the benchmark DAX index gaining 0.3 per cent to finish at 5,056.

Munich Re, the world's largest reinsurer, rose nearly 2 per cent, while rival Allianz gained 2.5 per cent, as investors expect European insurance companies to increase competitiveness once the single currency comes into being.

HONG KONG

HONG KONG shares closed slightly higher yesterday, with a lack of any real buying interest mitigated by some futures-related activity. The Hang Seng index closed at 10,225, a 0.5 per cent gain on the day.

"It has been a lousy year," said one trader. "A lot of funds see no need to go back into the market and take more risks."

Lai Sun Development, the property firm, gained 16 per cent on news that it would sell a stake in its Chinese property arm to repay HK\$20bn of debt.

Another turbulent year for shares

ONE OF the most troubling aspects when assessing the outlook for the equity market in 1999 is the sense that the lessons of 1998 are still not clear, even at this stage.

While the decisive global policy response in the final months of the year has clearly restored calm to world markets, it is impossible to say whether the underlying tensions have been resolved. If there is one lesson that we should have learnt in 1998 it is modesty, as the limits to our understanding of the global financial system became painfully clear.

Nevertheless, highlighting these uncertainties does not free us from the seasonal task of previewing the year ahead for the equity market.

An appraisal of the broad economic outlook looks like a good place to start. The story here seems straightforward. Inflationary pressures will probably continue to ease worldwide, but there should be no recession, either in the UK or in the global economy.

While at face value this seems a reassuring economic scenario, the underlying reality may be less comforting. Low real growth is one thing, low inflation another, but having both at once is unfamiliar territory for the UK economy.

Nominal GDP growth in the UK looks set to be around 3 per cent in 1999, the slowest growth in 50 years. This, of course, is not just a UK



PAUL O'CONNOR
Modest valuations and strong liquidity flows should provide good support

theme, but part of a much wider global phenomenon which should see lower growth across Europe in 1999 and in the US as well.

As companies are discovering, this is a world in which sales growth is hard to generate, requiring cutbacks in costs and investment to preserve profitability. The recent trend in analysts' earnings forecasts illustrates how these pressures are mounting.

Analysts began 1998 expecting earnings growth of 10 per cent for the year. But, as the graph displays, it has been downhill ever since. The latest estimate shows that analysts

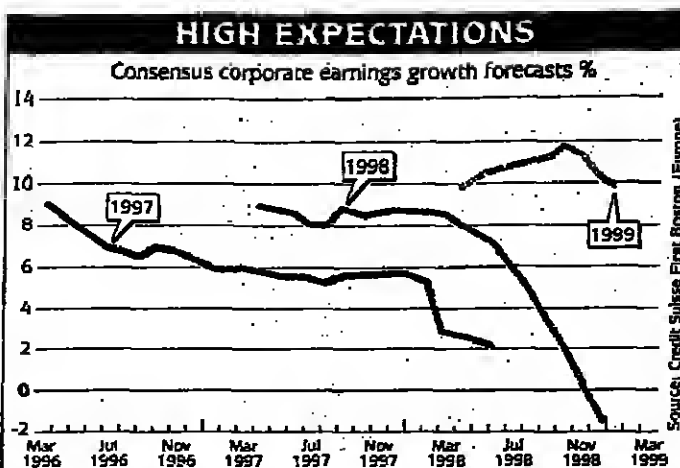
now expect earnings to fall by more than 1 per cent in 1998. The final outcome will probably be closer to -5 per cent.

This process has by no means run its course. Forecasts for earnings growth in 1999 show analysts once again starting the year expecting earnings to expand at a double-digit rate. So much for low nominal growth. The out-turn looks likely to be closer to zero than the current 12 per cent consensus forecast.

If that seems a recipe for a bad year ahead for the equity market, it is worth noting that the trend in the overall equity market has typically been only weakly correlated with forecast revisions. Furthermore, growth is not the only factor driving equity markets, and it is of some comfort that other key influences are sending more positive signals.

Economic policy is the first of these. While a world of low economic growth is one in which profits will expand more slowly than in the past, it is also a world of greater economic stability. With inflation and output volatility having fallen to historical lows and the economy exhibiting few signs of major financial imbalances, policy can continue to ease in 1999.

Base rates look set to fall from today's 6.25 per cent towards 5 per cent, with most of the cuts taking



place in the first half of the year. Further rate cuts look likely in the US and across Europe.

For equities, the prospect of further interest rate cuts provides encouragement to look through earnings downgrades and to focus on the prospect of growth recovering from late 1998. This is a global theme, to be reinforced in the UK by favourable fiscal measures. Both the cuts in corporation tax and the abolition of Advance Corporation Tax (ACT) in April will boost corporate profitability.

The second area of comfort for the equity market is valuation. Although equity analysts may be slow to adjust their forecasts in the face

of slowing growth, markets move swiftly. Current bond/equity valuations show that equities have already priced in a considerable degree of bad news. Indeed, the stock market is cheaper relative to bonds than it has been during recent recessions. While the easing of economic policy in 1999 should promote a re-rating of equities against bonds, at the very least it should strengthen the valuation floor.

In a valuation context, the prospect of structurally low inflation should reinforce this more positive cyclical story in 1999. While earnings may grow more slowly in a low inflation era, these earnings are likely to be of higher quality and more

durable than in the past, and therefore warrant a higher rating. There is strong empirical evidence of this inverse relationship between equity valuations and inflation. If inflation is historically low, then P/E multiples can stay historically high. Our own inflation valuation models would suggest that fair value on the UK market is pretty close to the current rating.

The third positive theme for the equity market in 1999 is liquidity. While liquidity fundamentals look healthy enough at the start of the year, the combination of falling interest rates and changes to both corporate tax and personal tax look set to strengthen these influences throughout the year, most notably in the first half.

For the second year running, 1999 may well see the corporate sector emerging as the biggest buyer of UK equities. M&A activity is booming, new insurance is scarce and share buybacks should remain widespread, boosted by the abolition of ACT in April.

Taking all these flows together, companies look set to be net buyers of UK shares to the tune of some £20bn in 1999, in the process adding more cash to already bulging institutional coffers.

The retail investor also looks set to be a big buyer in 1999. The prospect of PEPs disappearing is likely to encourage one final fling

by private investors to use up allowances in March and April while it is still possible.

Lower interest rates should reinforce this trend, a theme that may also influence institutional asset allocation in 1999.

While every rate cut improves equity market fundamentals, it also diminishes the appeal of cash as a rival asset. It is notable that the year begins with pension funds holding almost 7 per cent of their assets in cash, a weighting last seen in the early 1990s when interest rates were well into double digits.

In summary, while the prospect of frequent and sizeable earnings downgrades in the early months of the year will weigh heavily on the equity market in 1999, modest valuations and strong liquidity flows should provide good support.

As the year progresses, the beneficial impact of the easier policy environment should become more apparent, sustaining the market's advance towards our estimate of around 8,200 on the FTSE 100 by the year end.

While global influences should also become more supportive as the year progresses, we believe they remain capable of producing meaningful bouts of turbulence along the way. Expect surprises.

Paul O'Connor is an equity strategist at Credit Suisse First Boston.

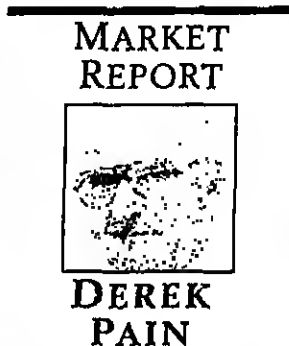
New Year tips brighten a lacklustre day for Footsie

IT LOOKED at one time as if Footsie would reclaim the 6,000 points level, last visited in July. But on a day renowned for traditionally thin trading, blue chips were unable to hang on to their best levels and the index closed with a 74.3 gain to 5,941.5.

New Year tips, real and rumoured, provided some interest but as invariably happens at this time of the year offices existed with a skeleton staff. Many big hitters were away and the few left in charge were more likely to make the type of precautionary move which often amplifies share movements.

The advent of the euro, prompting some big investors to sit on the sidelines, also restricted trading. The Stock Exchange attempted to pierce the malaise by reporting it had enjoyed another record year with domestic volume up 2.2 per cent.

Supporting shares moved ahead. The mid cap index rose 30.7 to 4,843.5 and the small cap 9.3 to 2,061.7. Not for the first time General Electric Co was



DEREK PAIN

under scrutiny as it, and others, continued to play the euro defence game. The shares were at one time 39p higher at a 58p share peak. They closed at 58p up 54.9p.

GEC is now said to be concentrating its corporate endeavours on four possible merger partners, including British Aerospace which has, on and off, been in the group's sights for years.

In fact six years ago, when BAE limped along at around 30p, GEC took a close interest in the then ailing group but de-

cided not to bid. Others said to be in talks with GEC are Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, the US groups, and Thomson-CSF of France, part owned by the French government which is said to be keen for talks to open.

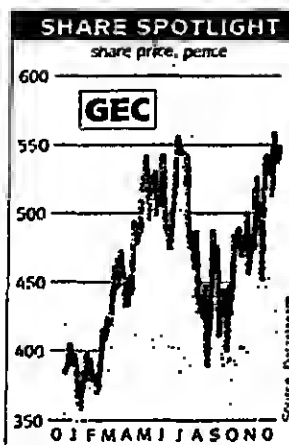
Peter Crane, GEC's director of government relations, said: "It is too early to say who the front runner is."

BAE, firm at 518p, was on the verge of clinching a deal with DaimlerChrysler of Germany before GEC barged into the fray.

Insurance shares had to contend with suggestions the holiday storms will cost the industry more than £100m; GRE was off 6p at 344p.

British Petroleum was down 8p at 908.5p. Just one hurdle remains to be cleared before its huge merger with Amoco can go ahead - clearance from the US Federal Trade Commission.

There are hopes the Federal Trade Commission will stir today allowing the deal to be completed tomorrow. If tomor-



row's deadline is missed it is hoped the merger will go through next week. The new hemlock's capitalisation will be around £85bn, the highest on the stock market.

Asda, up 4.25p to 163.25p, again responded to Wal-Mart bid rumours and Enterprise Oil, regarded as another takeover candidate, improved 5.5p to 233p.

As if to underline the low level of trading, the two shares leading the Footsie leader board were its most illiquid constituents.

Schroders rose 6p to 1,167p with volume put at 120,000 shares and the investment house's non-voting shares gained 51.5p to 996.5p with just 7,597 shares on the screen.

Takeover activity in the holiday industry, plus hopes of a hookings stampede, lifted Thomson Travel 11.5p to 160.5p. The shares are still below the spring-time flotation price and the 1999 touched soon afterwards.

On the day of England's surprising Test victory against Australia, cricket coverage became a live issue with Galaxy Media and Television Corporation hoping to catch the next world cup.

Galaxy, up 15p to 76.5p, said it may bid for the next two World Cup competitions and TC, which has won the contract to cover domestic Test matches for Channel 4, will "almost certainly" attempt to cover the World Cup. TC shares gained 18p to 235p.

Quadrant Healthcare slipped 2.5p to 77.5p after 16.7 million shares issued when a company called Andaris was acquired were sold at 77.5p. Nomura appears to have picked up the stock, lifting its stake to 28.17 per cent.

Zetters, thinking of splitting itself into separate bingo and football pool companies, lost 8p to 118.5p. United Carriers, where entrepreneur Luke Johnson has picked up 7.1 per cent, advanced 7p to 33.5p.

Takeover hopes again inspired European Motor, up 8p at 70p, and motor dealer DC Cook reversed 1.5p to 21.5p as a Henderson fund trimmed its stake to 7 per cent.

Trafficmaster, the vehicle security group, had an uncertain session, ending 21p lower at 532.5p.

A report that its new anti-theft device was unsafe found

ARTISAN, the house building and pub/restaurant refurbishment business that emerged from what is now Environmental Property Services earlier this month, is due to start work in January on contracts worth £3.8m. They include a new Belgo restaurant at London's Ladbroke Grove and a Pizza Express at Amersham. Artisan shares have fallen from around 6p to 4p since the demerger while EPS is 8.75p.

little sympathy with stockbroker Kilik.

"We believe the concerns raised were over played and the dip in the price is an opportunity to buy," it said.

MSB International, the IT recruitment group, made further headway, up 47.5p to 357.5p. An upbeat trading statement earlier this month has lifted the shares from a 140p low.

SEAQ VOLUME: 286.5 million
SEAQ TRADES: 35,620
GILT INDEX: N/A



New Borrower's Interest Rate
Dunfermline Building Society's variable rate for new mortgages for owner-occupiers is now 7.45%. Rates for other types of lending are available on request.

Notice to Existing Borrowers
From 1 January 1999, the Society's variable rates of interest for existing borrowers will be reduced by 0.50% p.a. gross. For borrowers with fixed rate mortgages, this change will affect the rate charged after the fixed rate period. Borrowers on the budget repayment scheme are not required to make any action and individual notices will be issued to borrowers outwith the scheme.

\$1bn a day outflow hits Brazilian share prices

SHARE PRICES in Brazil dived as capital flows out of the country hit the \$1bn mark for the second day running yesterday.

The amount of money that has left the country in December has reached almost \$6bn, compared with just under \$2bn in November.

The capital flight has topped the amount of emergency finance Brazil has so far received under a \$41.6bn rescue package led by the International Monetary Fund, announced at the beginning of December.

The faster pace of capital outflows reflects both year-end adjustments by foreign investors choosing not to roll over ma-

ture debt, and nervousness about whether the country will satisfy the terms of the IMF-led loans. These require a huge cut in the government's budget deficit, but earlier this month the Brazilian Congress rejected proposals for narrowing the gap between spending and revenues. New proposals are due to be debated in January.

However, with interest rates at 30 per cent to protect the currency's peg against the US dollar, Brazil faces a deep recession. This is making many politicians unwilling to agree to the spending cuts required by the IMF programme.

But the Fund's credibility is at stake as it was criticised for its handling of the Asian crisis. A renewed crisis in Brazil would prove deeply embarrassing.

The US Treasury is also determined to make a success of the Brazilian rescue. "If Brazil hits trouble, the rest of Latin America would pick up the contagion, and US banks are particularly exposed to the region," said Stephen Lewis, chief economist at Monument Derivatives.

The Sao Paulo Bovespa index fell 2.7 per cent yesterday after a near 4 per cent decline on Monday.

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE RATE CHANGE

The variable rate of mortgage interest will decrease by 0.50% from 1st January 1999. This notice is applicable to borrowers whose mortgage payments are updated annually. The effect of this change will be included in the Annual Update of payments in January 1999.

STROUD & SWINDON BUILDING SOCIETY **STROUD & SWINDON MORTGAGE COMPANY LIMITED**

NOTICE OF INTEREST RATES ON INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

The following interest rates on our currently marketed branch based and Direct investment accounts become effective from 1st January 1999.

PRODUCT	BALANCE	OLD GROSS RATE	NEW GROSS RATE	NEW NET RATE
120 DAY ACCOUNT (Annual Interest Rates)	£100,000 and over	7.16	6.60	5.28
	£50,000 to £99,999	6.80	6.30	5.04
	£25,000 to £49,999	6.55	6.00	4.60
	£10,000 to £24,999	6.00	5.50	4.40
	£5,000 to £9,999	5.75	5.25	4.20
60 DAY ACCOUNT (Annual Interest Rates)	£50,000 and over	5.90	5.40	4.32
	£25,000 to £49,999	5.50	5.00	4.00
	£10,000 to £24,999	5.25	4.75	3.80
	£5,000 to £9,999	4.50	4.00	3.20
	£2,000 to £4,999	4.25	3.75	3.00
TESSA	with Annual Interest	7.00	6.40	5.12
BRANCH INSTANT	with Annual Interest	5.26	4.76	3.81
CLASSIC GOLD (Annual Interest Rates)	£50,000 and over	4.30	3.80	3.04
	£25,000 to £49,999	4.00	3.50	2.80
	£10,000 to £24,999	3.60	3.10	2.48
	£5,000 to £9,999	3.10	2.60	2.08
	£2,000 to £4,999	2.55	2.05	1.64
MONEY BOX ACCOUNT (Annual Interest Rates)	£500 and over	6.50	6.00	4.80
	£5 to £499	6.25	5.75	4.60
TREASURER'S TRUST ACCOUNT (Annual Interest Rates)	£50,000 and over	3.65	3.15	2.52
	£25,000 to £49,999	3.20	2.70	2.16
	£10,000 to £24,999	2.70	2.50	2.00
	£5,000 to £9,999	2.45	2.25	1.80
	£500 to £4,999	2.20	2.10	1.68
INSTANT ACCOUNT (Annual Interest Rates)	£50,000 and over	6.66	6.35	5.08
	£25,000 to £49,999	6.35	5.80	4.64
	£10,000 to £24,999	6.06	5.50	4.40
	£5,000 to £9,999	5.85	5.30	4.24
	£2,000 to £4,999	5.56	5.00	4.00
THIRTY ACCOUNT (Annual Interest Rates)	£50,000 and over	7.00	6.50	5.20
	£25,000 to £49,999	7.00	6.50	5.20
	£10,000 to £24,999	7.00	6.45	5.16
	£5,000 to £9,999	6.75	6.20	4.96
	£2,000 to £4,999	6.25	5.70	4.56

Please note:
1. The contractual rate is the gross rate shown above. Net rates of interest are for illustrative purposes only and allow for the deduction from the gross rate of income tax at the appropriate rate (currently 20%) which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers.
2. All interest rates referred to in this notice and in these notes are variable except where stated. The frequency of interest payments is set out in the terms and conditions of each account type.

For monthly income accounts, the gross monthly applied rate has been adjusted to ensure that the compounded annual rate continues to equal the gross rate paid on annual interest accounts. All other closed and forward rate variable rates have been depressed. Full details of interest rates on all accounts are available at all branches of the Society.

HEAD OFFICE: POWCHOP STROUD GLOUCESTERSHIRE GL5 3BG TELEPHONE 01453 767011
Member of the Building Societies Association and subscriber to the Code of Mortgage Lending Practice

Notice to customers of Halifax International (Jersey) Limited.

Halifax International (Jersey) Limited announces revised interest rates effective from 1st January 1999.

BALANCE	ANNUAL INTEREST GROSS P.A. (CURRENT)	ANNUAL INTEREST GROSS P.A. (FROM 01/01/99)	MONTHLY INTEREST GROSS P.A. (FROM 01/01/99)
HALIFAX PREMIUM INTERNATIONAL			
£100,000+	7.15%	6.75%	6.55%
£50,000+	7.10%	6.70%	6.50%
£25,000+	6.90%	6.50%	6.31%
HALIFAX DEPOSIT INTERNATIONAL			
£100,000+	6.80%	6.40%	6.22%
£50,000+	6.60%	6.20%	6.03%
£25,000+	6.55%	6.15%	5.98%
£10,000+	6.10%	5.70%	5.56%
£5,000+	5.30%	5.15%	5.03%

If you have less than £25,000 in your Halifax Premium International account it will earn interest at the equivalent Halifax Deposit International rate. If you have less than £5,000 in your Halifax Premium International account or Halifax Deposit International account we will only pay you interest of 2.85% gross p.a. If you have less than £500 in your Halifax Premium International account or Halifax Deposit International account we will only pay you interest of 1.00% gross p.a. "Gross" means we will not take any tax off the interest we pay.

Further details can be obtained by calling Halifax International (Jersey) Limited on 01534 759840 (from within the UK) or +44 1534 759840 (from outside the UK).



30th December 1998

HALIFAX INTERNATIONAL (JERSEY) LIMITED, PO BOX 664, HALIFAX HOUSE, 31-33 NEW STREET, ST HELENS, JERSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS JE4 9WV

JAVICO 150

SPORT

FA Cup: Brian Talbot will tackle Leeds with a squad of full-time players roared on by a capacity crowd at Nene Park

No flaws in Rushden's diamonds

BY PHIL SHAW



IN 1992, when Leeds United were kicking off the inaugural Premier League campaign as champions, 315 spectators gathered in the Northamptonshire town of Irthlingborough to watch Rushden & Diamonds start life by drawing with Bilton in the Beazer Homes League (Midland Division).

On Saturday, a full house of 6,472 – more than the population of Irthlingborough – will witness the latest chapter in the rise and rise of Rushden & Diamonds. Nene Park, redeveloped as a stylish stadium within a sports and entertainment complex, plays host to Leeds in the third round of the FA Cup.

The visionary behind the would-be giant-killers is the owner of the Doc Martens footwear empire, Max Griggs. When he merged Rushden Town and Irthlingborough Diamonds and talked of League status by 2000, people questioned his sanity. They now lie third in the Conference, nine points behind nearby Kettering but with five games in hand.

Leeds will no more encounter a bunch of plumbers, teachers and insurance salesmen than a sloping mudheap or a damp dressing-room. Under the management of Brian Talbot, the former England midfielder who holds the title of head coach, Rushden & Diamonds have nearly 30 full-time players.

With support booming – 4,400 watched Monday's win over Woking – and the restaurants, bars, conference facilities, gymnasium, sauna and banqueting suites thriving, Griggs is confident the club will become self-financing. In the meantime, perhaps the song played after every home game, "Diamonds are Forever", should be followed by another from the Shirley Bassey songbook, "Big Spender".

Photographs by David Ashdown & Northampton Evening Telegraph

THE CHAIRMAN



MAX GRIGGS

I WAS on the Northampton board when they played at the county cricket ground. I didn't see the point of putting a few million into a team rather than a club. The set-up here is much more than a football club. The Diamond Centre is a focal point for the community. The football's the fun bit in the middle.

It's got to be fun or it isn't worth doing, is it? We may have spent £20m creating all this but in a way we've just swapped money for assets. We've still got the land, a 70-acre site, so people who think we've just poured money into a non-League team are missing the point. You create things around the club to offset the costs.

Once said I wanted to be in the League by the end of the century and we could actually do this sea-

son. I think Wimbledon are great – the way they went through the divisions was a great role model for us. It's not just a pipe-dream to believe that we could get to the Premiership; we've got a catchment area of 200,000 people within 10 minutes' drive.

We never considered switching this tie to Leeds. What would have been the point of building this lovely stadium if we had? I'm looking forward to seeing a full house of 6,000-plus for the first time. We've kept ticket prices at Conference levels so no one can say they were fleeced. The occasion is everything; whatever the result, I want to look back and say: "That was a great day".

THE MANAGER



BRIAN TALBOT

MY PRIORITY is to win promotion from the Conference, but this game with Leeds is a lovely distraction. When the chairman asked me to join the club last year he said: "Come and have some fun". Well it doesn't get much more enjoyable or exciting than this.

If we had a bad playing surface and run-down facilities we might have had a chance. But it won't be like Stevenage and Newcastle. We'll treat Leeds with the respect they deserve, which is immense. You ask David O'Leary which player he'd take off me and there wouldn't be one; I'd take every one of his. David and I played together at Highbury and shared a room at the Grosvenor before the 1979 FA Cup final. He was always a thinker.

Leeds will find that this is no or-

inary non-League set-up, to put it mildly, but the perception of us as a wealthy club puts pressure on my players. The supporters expect a lot of them because of the money that's been spent and the facilities here. They think we've got a divine right to win things, but no one has.

All I know is that there's only one League place available and we're as good as any team in the Conference. It's a shame some of the other clubs are a little jealous. We're hospitable to them but we don't always get the same when we go away. Everyone tries that bit harder against us – they all want to beat the so-called Manchester United of non-League football.

THE FAN



MARK STRINGER

WHEN I was 16 I started watching Rushden Town youth and reserves because a mate played for them, and I began following them. Our main ambition was survival. We were getting gates of 50 to 100, and when we finished 14th in the Beazer Homes Premier Division we got demoted because the ground was in such disrepair.

Like a lot of fans of the old Rushden club I was against the merger. We were only one level below the Conference and we didn't want to travel to Irthlingborough. But I came to the first match and decided to keep records. Now I'm the unofficial statistician.

No one had any idea it was going to take off like this. We're attracting new supporters yet there's no resentment about "glory-hunters".

People talk about "family" clubs – this really is one. But I go to every away match and there's a definite animosity, hokes shouting: "You think you can buy this league?"

I feel it's inevitable that we'll get into the League. I remember seeing Wimbledon's name on the Southern League championship shield, which made me think. It's like a roller-coaster ride. We don't know where it'll lead, though I can honestly see us reaching the Premiership.

I work locally as a carpenter and everyone's talking about the Leeds game. For me, making it a great day is more important than the result, as long as we don't lose heavily. The publicity will help us attract the players we need to keep going forward.

THE PLAYER

RAY WARBURTON

UNTIL OCTOBER I was the Northampton captain and had led in two Wembley play-off finals. I had big reservations about dropping into the Conference, but in the end I viewed it as a sideways step. We'll certainly go up to the Third Division, if not this season then the next. I was in League football for 15 years and this is the most professional set-up I've known.

I signed in time to play in the fourth qualifying round at Leatherhead and was fortunate enough to get a last-minute equaliser. We won the replay 4-0, then put out Shrewsbury and Doncaster. I'm a Yorkshireman, from Rotherham, so to be away against Leeds was beyond my best dreams. I only hope I'm fit. I worried my knee ligaments before Christmas.

This is the biggest game the club's had, if not the most important. Newcastle came here for a friendly when Kevin Keegan was manager but a competitive match against a top Premiership side – that's something else. If we hit top form and get the luck, and they don't fancy it, who knows?



Leeds certainly won't be able to use the pitch or facilities as an excuse. That's a problem for us in the Conference: every visiting team

raise their game. It's like Northampton going to Eland Road or Hillsborough. And when we play away we get called "moneybags". We are

well paid – though nowhere near the two grand a week some papers say we're on – and that riles some teams.

THE FOUNDER

TONY JONES

I WAS among a group of lads who formed an Under-18 team in 1946. We were inspired by Moscow Dynamo, who had just completed their famous British tour, so we called ourselves Irthlingborough Dynamos. We soon decided it was too copycat and amended it to Diamonds. I became secretary at 18 and it was my baby.

We graduated to semi-pro level in the United Counties League, and in '59 we opened our own ground on this site. In the early 90s, with me getting older, crowds lower and money tighter, I decided I wanted out, provided the Diamonds lived on. I offered the club to two ex-players who were businessmen. They said no, but Max agreed to take it on as long as I stayed on board as vice-chairman.

For two weeks he was chairman of Irthlingborough Diamonds. Then he said: "What about merging with Rushden? They're in a mess". I watched the stand and clubhouse we'd built get bulldozed away in two hours, but there are no regrets. Besides, the memories live on. One of the photos hanging in the various



suites shows Brian Talbot awarding the prizes at our dinner 20 years ago, soon after he'd joined Arsenal.

I regard this tie as a great opportunity to project ourselves to players who don't want the stigma

of going non-League. I watched Leeds at Arsenal and for half an hour their youngsters ran them ragged. I've never seen football played so fast. So there's a little bit of trepidation mixed in with a feeling of enormous excitement.

Fletcher relaxed about his future direction

YOU ARE a 42-year-old non-League manager with an FA Cup tie looming. What better time to be trying out a new playing position? That is the situation of Paul Fletcher, player-manager of Southport, of the Football Conference, potential giant-killers when they host Leyton Orient at Haig Avenue on Saturday.

A mere 26 years after starting his long League career as a central defender with his home-town club, Chester, Fletcher is trying midfield for size. Presumably, if that does not work out, he can be expected to have a run up front with the youth team.

"I played part of a season there for Oldham, but it's not a position I ever really saw myself playing," he says. "It's not something I could see myself doing for a long period of time, but for the last three or four games I haven't had a lot of other options."

Fletcher occupied more familiar territory when he brought himself on as a substitute in Southport's starting victory over Mansfield in the last round; indeed, there can hard-

ly be a more experienced defender still playing at a good level in Britain. As a young up-and-comer at Luton, he looked a certainty for full England caps, rather than the Under-21 and Football League honours for which he ultimately had to settle.

With his twin, Ron, very much as the makeweight, he was a big-money signing when Tony Book was in charge at Manchester City, 20 years and about as many managers ago. The returning Malcolm Allison never fancied him as much and he left after two seasons, taking in Oldham, Derby, Barnsley, Halifax and Grimsby on the rest of his League travels.

"As a young player, I really used to play it off the cuff. I used to stroke it about and, in those days, you could always play it back to the goalkeeper, but I still made the odd mistake."

"I was a good player, but I'd always give you a chance. When I was at Luton as a 17-year-old, though, I was a bit like that lad at Villa, Gareth Barry."

Notable prodigy as he was, Fletcher reckons he played some of his best – and certainly most mature – football at Grimsby when he was already deep into his mid-30s. He even had a spell in charge there on a caretaker basis but was not wanted when a permanent appointment was made.

"I'd played League football until 39 and I just went to Droylesden to keep fit. But from there I got a phone call to be player-manager at Grimsby and had a fair bit of success there for 18 months."

He is now midway through his second season with Southport, having guided them to the final of the FA Trophy in his first. Adventures in

Cup competitions are all very well, of course, but the priority for a club that lost its League status must be the quest to reclaim it.

"Halifax have proved that it can be done and Macclesfield are in the Second Division, competing with the likes of Manchester City. Who would have thought that three years ago?"

Southport are in mid-table in the Conference, having played less games than most of the clubs above them, but Fletcher does not believe that the FA Cup is a distraction.

"But we've had a bit of luck in our Cup run that hasn't always been there in our League matches. We've been creating chances but not converting them, whereas at Mansfield we stuck a couple of good goals away."

Drawing Southport cannot be



Paul Fletcher: Has not even watched the opposition Peter Jay

counted as good luck for Orient, beaten by Conference opposition in the Cup for the past two seasons and rather unconvincing winners over another Conference side, Kingstonian, in the second round.

Fletcher is so relaxed about it all that he has not even watched the op-

position and there is a good deal of League experience – starting with the goalkeeper, Billy Stewart – in the Southport side to help them take it all in their stride at Haig Avenue this Saturday.

Fletcher's personal best in the competition amounts to a couple of

tastes of the quarter-finals. He was not planning to rush into a decision on what role he will play in this tie, but it is hard to imagine him resisting the temptation. He does, after all, live in the Yorkshire town of Holmfirth, 70 miles from Southport, about 75 from the sea and famous as the setting for *Last of the Summer Wine*.

It could be the last swallow for Fletcher.

"I'm not going to go on flogging a dead horse, although I'm still fit," he says.

It will not, however the result goes, be the end of the Fletcher family involvement in the FA Cup. His sister's son is Liverpool's Danny Murphy; another nephew, Stephen Fletcher, is at Wrexham, while Paul's own son, Ben, is a second-year YTS trainee at Oldham.

As for Ron, he lives around the corner in Holmfirth and is a youth development officer at Bradford City. By Fletcher standards, he's a bit of a half-hearted football man, though. He retired before he was 40.



New Zealand could put together only one partnership of any substance - 41 runs for the second wicket between Matthew Horne and Stephen Fleming.

TA C Parore run out	0
P J Wiseman not out	1
Extras (b4, b1, nb1)	0
Total (for A)	73
Falls: 1-0, 2-42, 3-51, 4-67	
To bats: C L Carris, O J Nash, O L Vettori, S B Doull	
Bowling: S Smith 8.1-27.1 (nb1); Prasad 6.1-20.0; Kumble 11.5-19.2; Singh 2.1-6.0; Tendulkar 1.0-1.0.	
Umpires: A C Nicholas (NB) and A E Watkins (NZ)	

Photographs: Allsport/Empics/BSkyE

New Zealand could put together only one partnership of any substance - 41 runs for the second wicket between Matthew Horne and Stephen Fleming.

FORM VERDICT

هكذا من الاصل

Hunt is over for new idol

WHILE the hunting horses were vaulting shrubbery and swerving placards on Boxing Day, one of their former number was himself parading the message for country animals in the big city.

It is a salutary thought that Teeton Mill, the King George VI Chase winner at Kempton, would still be potting around rural England had he not been a speculative purchase for a tipping company.

Stephen Winstanley, of The Winning Line, laid out £40,000 for the grey, largely due to the horse's record of excellence in the pointing field. Caroline Bailey, his previous trainer, was happy to let Teeton Mill go as the horse's medical book is as thick as a millman's ledger. "We decided that the offer was good and it was the right time to sell," she says. "Nobody else would have bought him with his legs like that."

Without that transaction, Teeton Mill would still be in the livery in Northamptonshire at Spratton ("the farm protected by the ridge"), and handing out horrible beatings to whatever crossed him in the pointing field. "Hunting was his life before he left here and he'd still be doing it if he was still around," Bailey says. "We always liked him, but obviously we didn't realise he was going to be as good as he showed at Kempton. We would probably have run him in the Cheltenham Foxhunters."

This was so nearly the equivalent of Ronaldo playing out his whole career on the Hackney Marshes.

The most startling of Teeton Mill's attributes is his jumping, and it is probably true that it is easier to leap without the Pychley bounds yapping at your feet and getting in the way.

By RICHARD EDMONDSON

The grey now seems to effect the precision landings of an Indian fakir lowering himself on to a bed of nails, yet in the old days he was a hit of a duffer. There were two falls and an unseated in his first four outings. "He was very weak as a youngster, but the family do get better with age so we were happy to leave him alone," Bailey says. "We didn't over-race him or risk him on the firm, because we got a warning with his legs, and the rewards of that."

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Goodtime George (Stratford 12.50)
NB: Optimistic Thinker (Stratford 3.50)

policy are showing now. "When he did start, he was unlucky. They were both very unfortunate falls because he slipped on landing." Then, one day, he carried Trevor Marks to victory at Gulesborough and a sequence had begun.

As he progressed, Teeton Mill hunted his way over disused rails, hedgerows and whatever else Mother Nature could construct. He became most proficient. "When he was hunting, he used to come up against all sorts of obstacles and I'm sure that helped his jumping," Bailey says. "Hunting helps to bring your legs up. He was always very neat when he got in close."

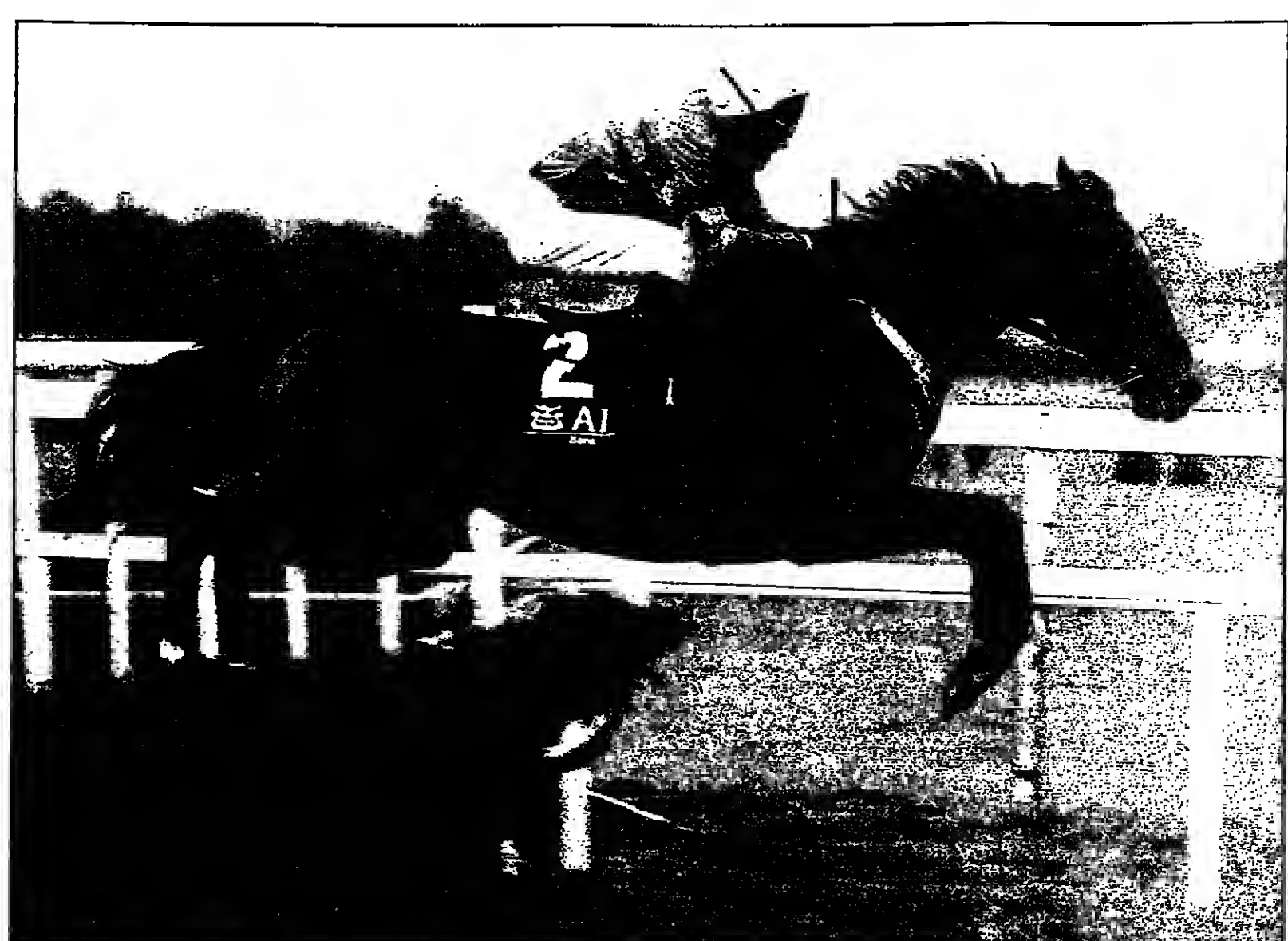
"It's a good schooling ground and I think the top hunters like Spartan Missile, Gritter and now this horse have shown the best can hold their own. If you can get to one of the best pointing horses, they are probably in the top 10 to 15 three-mile chasers in the country."

Indeed, for those who think of pointing as little more than shoe-gins being passed between the country set then there may have to be a reappraisal. As well as Teeton Mill, this equine division has also produced Cool Dawn, Coome Hill and See More Business in recent years.

It is estimated that between 250 and 300 horses which ran in points last season will run in jumps races under Rules this campaign and the trend seems to be growing.

The Irish point-to-point scene used to be the sport which took place to the humming sound of British owners flicking through a cheque book and a similar noise has been heard on France's racecourses in recent years. It may have been that the purchasers were ignoring comparable produce at their local corner shop. Certainly Teeton Mill's achievements will now raise the stakes for pointers on this island.

"Ours is a competitive game these days and people who think all we are running are slow, old hunters will have to acknowledge that those times have gone," Bailey says. "We have always been offended when owners paid such a lot of money for horses from the Irish point-to-points, but now we are delighted. I hope they all come and buy some more. We may have ruined things for the purchasers but certainly not for the vendors."



The big horse: Istabraq consolidates his position as Europe's top hurdler with an easy win at Leopardstown yesterday Caroline Norris

Heavyweight performance from Istabraq

ISTABRAQ HARDLY broke out of a canter to win a three-runner race at odds of 1-10 at Leopardstown yesterday and is on course to defend the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham in March. His next run will be in the AIG Europe Hurdle at the Dublin track next month.

"He did it well, particularly as he's the heaviest he has ever been in his life here today," Aidan O'Brien, his trainer, said. Charlie Swan, his regular partner, was delighted with the exercise workout to claim the £13,750 prize. "I loved the way

he settled and although he was a bit long at the last and gave me a bit of a fright he is in great form," Swan reported.

Quizzed about the impressive Christmas Hurdle win of French Holly at Kempton, O'Brien said: "He was impressive as well. I believe he may be coming for the AIG Europe Hurdle, but I wouldn't mind if he stayed at home."

The favourite for French Holly's Kempton race, Dato Star, was nursing his bruised reputation yesterday but his trainer, Malcolm Jefferson, re-

mained positive. "I'm not frightened of anything and he'll definitely run in the Champion Hurdle but I don't think I'll run him before then," he said.

"He's had a busy time of it recently and we've run him three times on the flat and three times over hurdles. We may have gone to the well too often and I think it's time to give the horse a rest."

Also taking a rest is French Holly's rider, Andrew Thornton, as a bout of flu has led to an infection in his left leg. Thornton rode Polar Champ to finish

second in the opener at Taunton yesterday, before calling a halt to his afternoon's activity.

"In hindsight, maybe it wasn't such a good idea to ride," he admitted. "But I was on a bit of a high from my four-time and was quite fired up. I have had a bit of flu and the leg which I broke last year has become infected. If I take some antibiotics, it may calm it."

Tommy Stack was reported "comfortable and stable" in hospital yesterday where he is being treated for a viral infection which has left him seriously ill.

FIRST SHOW									
Stratford 2.50									
Horse	C	H	L	S	J				
Act In Time	41	51	52	51	41				
Sold Statement	112	51	51	112	51				
Pepper's Rock	51	112	52	112	51				
Boots Meekles	51	51	112	112	51				
Kinnahill	51	52	51	52	51				
Headstrong	124	51	51	51	51				
Thornhill	51	51	51	51	51				
Horseshoe	51	51	51	51	51				
Malin	51	51	51	51	51				
Castle Hill	51	51	51	51	51				
Early Dealer	151	51	51	51	51				
Highland Jack	251	201	251	201	251				
Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3									
C Cont. H Wm H L Larkins S Stryker T Tice									

STRATFORD									
HYPERION									
12.50	Beau Brummie Boy	2.50	Bold Statement						
1.20	Brown Seal	2.50	Play Games						
1.50	Far Springs	3.50	Optimistic Thinker (nb)						
2.20	GLOWING PATH (nap)								
GOING: Soft.									
Left-hand course with 200yd run-in.									
Course set for the first time since 1997. A438, Stratford station 1st. ADMISSON: Club £4; Veterans £3; Course £4. Accompanied under 16s free. CAR PARK: £2, rest free.									
LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 32 wins from 124 runners (25.8%). O Nicholson 15-54 (33.3%). P Hobbs 14-27 (20.9%). K Bailey 12-62 (19.4%).									
LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 54 (1st) 146 (23.3%). R Johnson 22-12 (50.6%). A McGuire 19-71 (26.2%). R Dunwoody 16-33 (21.7%).									
FAVOURITES: 771 wins from 474 races (success rate 37.3%).									
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Misty Rain 220.									

12.50 RICHARDSON'S OF OLDUBRY MAIDEN HURDLE (E) (DIV 1) £3,000 2m 6f 11yds Penalty Value £2,250									
05	BEAU BRUMMIE BOY	(25) (Mrs Deane Williams) 11.5	W Bailey						
07	EDGE AHEAD	(11) (Mrs John Thomas) 11.5	M J Pipe						
08	GOOTIME HURDLE	(11) (Mrs M J Pipe) 11.5	M J Pipe						
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BETTING: 4a Goodtime Goggles, 5-2 Favourite, 3-1 Flyford, 7-1 Kac, Kallen, 11-2 Edge Ahead, 11-4 Beau Brummie Boy, 16-1 Flying Footie, 20-1 Strong Midge, Springfield, 25-1 others
99% Keng On The Run 4-1 R R Johnson 10-30 Jkw (Dr Nicholson) 12 n

Gallagher's rethink gives Arsenal hope

ARSENAL WERE last night hoping that the season of goodwill from referees to players continues after Aston Villa's goalkeeper was given a reprieve by the referee Dermot Gallagher for his sending-off in the Boxing Day game against Blackburn.

Gallagher plans to write to the Football Association informing them that he made a "genuine error of judgment" in Oakes' case - and that will give hope to Arsène Wenger in his bid to force another referee, Uriah Rennie, into a similar change of heart over the red card he showed Patrick Vieira for use of the elbow in Monday's game at Charlton.

While Villa's hopes of continuing their quest for the Premiership title will be vastly improved by the news, Arsenal's chances of retaining the championship could be harmed irreparably by a suspension for Vieira, according to their former player Alan Smith.

The Oakes reprieve came after Gallagher reviewed video evidence with his linesman, Dave Horlick, and the Premier League referee's officer, Philip Don. The incident occurred with Villa trailing 1-0 in a game which went on to lose 2-1, and one which left the Villa manager, John Gregory, fuming with Gallagher.

Oakes caught a loose ball just inside his own area with his momentum carrying him forward, although he immediately released the ball as he reached the 18-yard line. Gallagher, however, decided to issue a red card after the linesman had flagged, wrongly as it turned out, to indicate that Oakes had handled the ball outside the penalty area.

The furore, with the Sky

BY MARK PIERSON

cameras proving Oakes did not handle the ball out of his area, spurred Gallagher to look at video replays along with Horlick and Don.

A Premier League spokesman, Mike Lee, said: "Dermot Gallagher, in consultation with Philip Don, the Premier League's referees' officer, has reviewed the video of the sending-off of Aston Villa goalkeeper Michael Oakes in the game against Blackburn."

"In discussion with referee's assistant Dave Horlick, they have concluded that there was a genuine error of judgment by the assistant."

"Mr Gallagher will now be writing to the FA to inform them of his conclusion, with a view to the sending-off not being dealt with as a disciplinary matter."

The matter is now in the hands of the FA, who are certain to accept the reconsidered views of Gallagher and quash Oakes' red card, according to Don.

Don said: "At the end of the day we want to see the right decisions are made and Dermot has agreed to write to the FA and inform them an error was made."

"I would now expect the FA to reverse the decision once they receive Dermot's letter and his report."

"It's obviously good news for Aston Villa, but if we are seen to be making the right moves, then on this occasion it's to the credit of the referee's assistant."

Meanwhile, Vieira is due for a suspension after he became Arsenal's sixth player this season to be sent off, in Monday's game at Charlton. The Gunners

have also accumulated 46 yellow cards between them this season, a record that their former striker Smith feels will seriously disrupt their chances of defending the title.

"It is a problem," said Smith, who was booked just once in his entire Arsenal career, in the 1993 FA Cup final replay against Sheffield Wednesday at Wembley. "With all the injuries Arsenal have had the last thing they need is to lose players like Vieira through suspension."

"I felt for him because his sending-off at Charlton looked harsh, and if the suspension is upheld then they will miss him."

Smith, like everybody else, cannot understand why Arsenal attract such a bad record, but he fears it will be harmful in the long run.

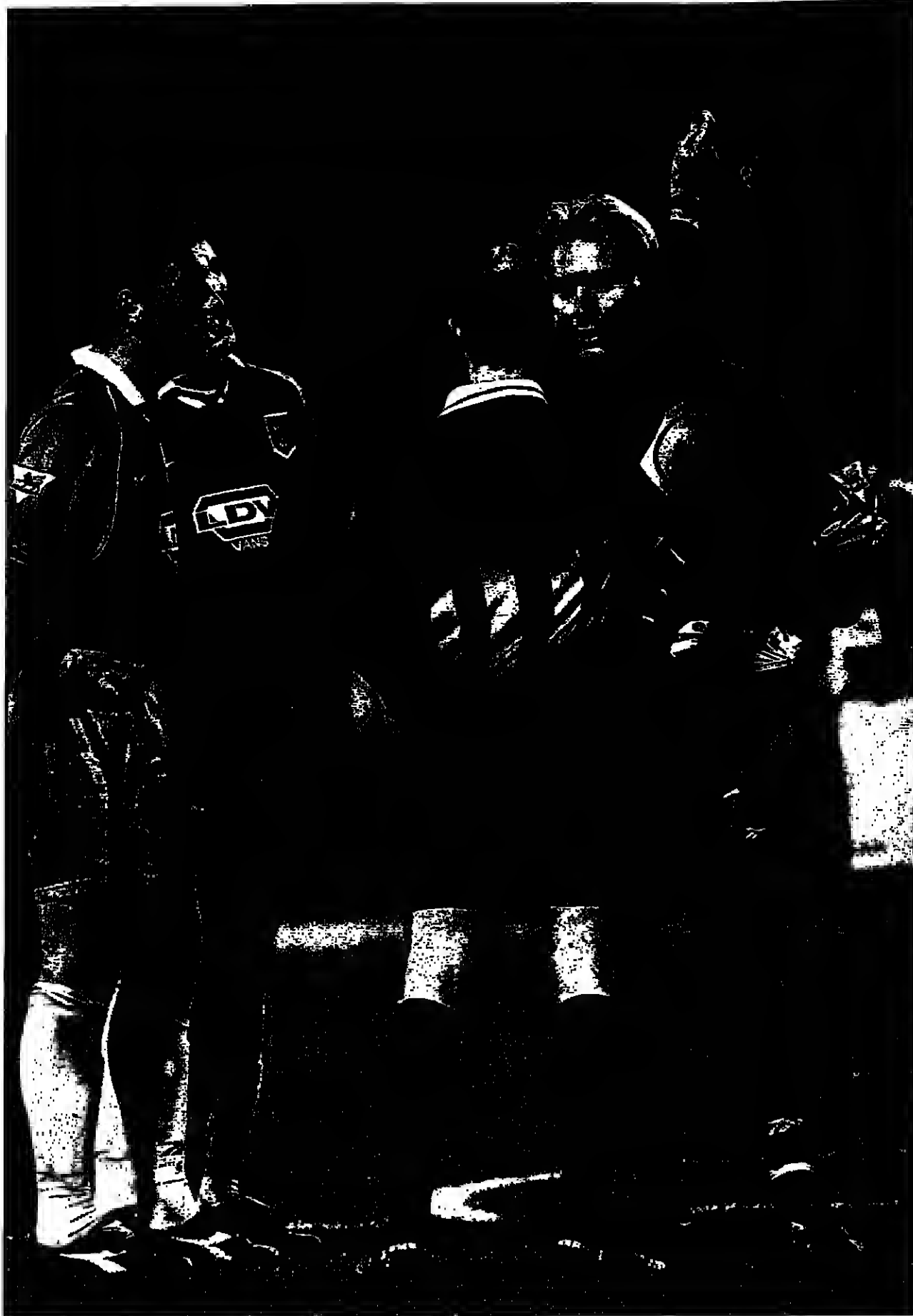
He said: "It has been a long-standing problem, the discipline at Arsenal. It is something which doesn't get any better."

"Arsène needs all his boys together. It is bad enough that they are not going to have Nicolas Anelka and Dennis Bergkamp for a while through injury - that will affect them without having to worry about suspensions."

"In the final run-in last season Arsenal had everybody available, and I think they need that if they are going to have a good chance of retaining their title."

Arsenal have appealed to referee Rennie to reverse Vieira's red card after television evidence had suggested the offence was not as serious as it might have seemed.

Besides Vieira, the other five Arsenal players to be dismissed this season are Petit, Lee Dixon, Martin Keown, Ray Parlour and Gilles Grimandi.



Aston Villa's Michael Oakes is dismissed by Dermot Gallagher at Ewood Park on Boxing Day. Action Images

Blackburn finally sign Ward for £4.5m

ASHLEY WARD last night became Brian Kidd's second signing since he took over as Blackburn's manager, moving to Ewood Park for £4.5m from Barnsley on a four and a half year contract believed to be worth £14,000 a week.

Ward is seen as the perfect substitute for Chris Sutton, who will miss the next six weeks after suffering a knee injury during the 2-1 victory over Aston Villa on Boxing Day. The 23-year-old, who follows the ex-Newcastle winger Keith Gillespie to the club, looks certain to make his debut in this Saturday's FA Cup third round tie at home to Charlton.

Newcastle are expected to unveil the defender Didier Domi as their latest signing this morning for a fee of around £4m from Paris St-Germain. Domi was on Tyneside yesterday, but did not travel to Liverpool with the squad.

The former French international Mickael Mader is moving the other way and joining PSG on a six-month loan from Everton, the French club said yesterday. The 30-year-old striker joined Everton a year ago from the Spanish club, Deportivo La Coruña.

The Rangers manager, Dick Advocaat, has refused to commit himself to the club beyond his existing two-year contract. The Dutchman stressed that talk of his long-term future is premature, even though he has said he thinks the job of making Rangers as strong as he would like will take longer than the year and a half remaining on his present deal.

The Scottish veteran striker John McGinlay has signed an 18-month contract with Oldham Athletic. The 34-year-old has been paid on a match-to-match basis since joining the Second Division strugglers from Bradford in October, after recovering from persistent Achilles tendon trouble that ended his hopes of going to the World Cup in France with Scotland.

McGinlay will be reminded of one of his finest moments when he faces Chelsea in the FA Cup third round at Boundary Park on Saturday. He was part of the Bolton team that had remarkable cup runs in 1996, scoring in a memorable League Cup victory over Chelsea.

McGinlay said: "I'm pleased to have got this contract sorted out. Initially Oldham were only offering me a deal until the end of the season, but to get the extra year is a big boost."

Preston's manager, David Moyes, will use £600,000 from coffers swelled by income from the forthcoming FA Cup tie against Arsenal to finance a club record bid for Richard Cresswell. Moyes has made an offer for the York striker who is also being watched by Premier League clubs. York value Cresswell at £1m.

Preston will have a sell-out crowd at Deepdale against the double winners and with live TV coverage they are guaranteed around £300,000 from the night.

The veteran Italian midfielder, Nicola Berti, is leaving Tottenham to join Fluminense in Brazil. The Rio club said yesterday that the 31-year-old would sign a two-year contract with them on Saturday. The contract, said to be worth £250,000 a year, is expected to be financed in part by Brazil's Fontecindam investment bank.

Berti, who played for Italy in the World Cups of 1990 and 1994, is part of a rebuilding campaign by Fluminense, who slipped into the equivalent of the Third Division last season after being one of Brazil's leading clubs in the Eighties.

The 31-year-old French defender, Jean-Guy Wallemme, who joined Coventry from Lens in the summer, is expected to complete his return to France today by signing for Sochaux.

Freund to make friends at Spurs Beckenbauer fears Brazil

GEORGE GRAHAM can hardly wait for Steffen Freund, Tottenham's latest German import, to arrive in the new year and provide the glint of steel which he believes is fundamental to his White Hart Lane revolution.

But having wrapped up the £750,000 signing of the tough-tackling international midfielder from Borussia Dortmund last week, Graham has agreed to honour Freund's commitment to a family holiday with his wife, Ilka, and their two children during the Bundesliga's mid-season winter break.

Freund, a qualified locksmith, is expected to make his Tottenham debut at Sheffield Wednesday on 9 January.

Graham is convinced he will soon become known to the Spurs fans as their midfield enforcer as well as a player who can open more doors for an already well-equipped attack.

Jürgen Klinsmann was the star who restored charisma to Tottenham - even during some dark days under previous managers, Ossie Ardiles, Gerry Francis and Christian Gross - but Freund is the battler Graham believes Spurs now need most of all to help establish an era of lasting success.

The Spurs manager said: "I'm delighted to have signed him and he will be coming here to do what he is good at - winning the ball and then passing it. There is great enthusiasm

running through the side now, but we still need something more to make sure the improvement continues."

"It's something that the top teams like Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea all have, players who dominate the midfield and make others play."

"This guy has all the experience in the world with Borussia Dortmund in their European campaigns and with Germany as part of their squad in Euro 96 and the World Cup finals. It will be a couple of weeks before he's here, but he'll soon become a big favourite with the fans."

Monday's 4-1 win over Everton was Tottenham's most conclusive White Hart Lane victory for two years and further proof

that Graham is getting the maximum out of a squad who flirted dangerously with relegation last season. The win extended an unbeaten home record under Graham to eight matches, but he is far from satisfied with a respectable mid-table position.

Freund is only Graham's second signing for Spurs, and he is still waiting for the £1.6m former Ipswich full-back, Mauricio Taricco, to recover fully from an ankle injury after his move to Tottenham five weeks ago.

Freund has 21 German caps, but his international career has been dogged by injuries and he has not yet figured in the plans of the new German

coach, Erich Ribbeck. Freund was born in Brandenburg and was one of the first East German players to be capped by the unified international side. He played for Schalke 04 before joining Borussia Dortmund in 1993.

His contract at Dortmund was due to expire at the end of this season and he would have become a free agent. The Tottenham director of football, David Pleat, said: "We wanted to do the deal now because Freund is the kind of midfield action man that every club needs."

Now Graham is looking at the French midfielders Alain Goma (Paris St Germain) and Michael Debove (Lens) as possible targets.

FRANZ BECKENBAUER believes Brazil poses a greater threat to Germany's hopes of staging the 2006 World Cup than England, but the suggestion could be another attempt to belittle England's bid. The initial deadline for applications is two days away.

The newly elected vice-president of the German Football Association and head of Germany's World Cup organising committee personally handed in his country's bid to Fifa, the world game's ruling body. England, Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Ghana and Morocco are the other six nations vying for the right to stage the tournament, with the latter three regarded as virtual non-starters. Candidates have until 30 April next year to confirm their official bid. A Fifa spokesman said he did not expect Argentina and Nigeria to apply.

Beckenbauer said: "It's up to us. We have to show the world that Germany is the best place to organise a World Cup. But I regard Brazil as the more dangerous rival to Germany than England, although we still have a lot of homework to do."

Beckenbauer thinks South Africa, the apparent choice of the Fifa president, Sepp Blatter, will struggle to meet the strict criteria for hosting the World Cup laid down by the game's governing body. Fifa require that eight to 12 stadiums have a capacity of at least

40,000, with one ground able to accommodate 80,000-plus and another over 60,000.

In the first week of January, Fifa will start asking questions concerning security, taxes, customs, visas and telecommunications, before delving into other matters like infrastructure, accommodation and transport facilities in the bidding countries, as well as arrangements for ticket sales and the specific circumstances of the grounds included in the bids.

Beckenbauer and the German FA's president, Egidius Braun, are soon to meet the German finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, and the home secretary, Otto Schily, to ask them to abolish certain taxes, which if enforced would reduce Fifa's profits.

Joseph Blatter, the chairman of Fifa, is concerned about the influx of money into football watering down its real value as a people's sport. In an article in Germany's sports weekly Kicker, Blatter also says he is also concerned by the influence of business and television on the game. "Even accepting the rules of supply and demand, we must still ask ourselves whether too much money comes into play, whether the players have lost their moderation and become too egotistical and influential? Is not the influence of industry, television, and even politics too great?"

Oxford to launch League pay-per-view

OXFORD'S FIXTURE with Sunderland at the Manor Ground on 27 February will make football history when it becomes the first competitive Football League game in this country to be screened via pay-per-view.

The League yesterday announced details surrounding their pay-per-view experiment which they hope will lead to six matches broadcast by the end of the season.

Manchester City's trip to Colchester on 20 March has also been earmarked for live coverage, with both matches scheduled for a 6pm kick-off and broadcast by Sky Box Office.

The Football League are in

discussion with their member clubs in a bid to show up to four more live games, with each available to Sky subscribers for a one-off fee of £7.95.

Sky's coverage already takes in 60 matches plus the play-offs, and the League chief executive, Richard Scudamore, said: "It has long been known that football has been looking at the opportunities offered by pay-per-view broadcasting."

"We feel the time is right to show a limited number of games and Sky have helped us to do this. Television and football are constantly evolving and we have to be responsible."

"These matches will bring in

extra revenue for the clubs and the League at a time when it is very much needed, and fans who cannot get a ticket or travel to a game will welcome the chance to see them. However, both the Football League and Sky Television want to keep the correct balance of coverage and to ensure that existing broadcast arrangements are unaffected."

It is believed the financial split will see Sky take half of the subscribed fee, with the rest then divided three ways between the home team, away side and the Football League.

The League believes pay-per-view will provide them with much-needed leverage when it

comes to negotiating a new television deal. Spokesman Chris Hull said: "This is an opportunity for us to gather information and research into the pay-per-view concept. This is not a money-making exercise."

"There's also an element of customer care involved as we will be targeting matches which will quite clearly have a full capacity, with many fans unable to attend. The main thing is that pay-per-view will be beneficial to the Football League come the next round of TV deal negotiations, whenever they will be."

"We will be in possession of more details regarding pay-per-view, which will form a significant part of broadcasting in the 21st century."

The Sky Sports managing director, Vic Wakeling, underlined the commitment to their existing customers will not alter, despite the introduction of pay-per-view.

He said: "This will not affect our existing live coverage of Sky Sports in any way. During this experiment, Sky Box Office will simply offer extra live matches, concentrating on games which look sure to be sell-outs."

"Sky Sports will continue to show 60 live games from across the divisions of the Nationwide Football League, plus all three play-off finals live."

Juventus may link Dugarry and Sukur

JUVENTUS ARE poised to pull off a double transfer coup and link the French World Cup winning forward Christophe Dugarry with leading Turkish striker Hakan Sukur.

Dugarry, 26, is believed to be on the point of joining the Italian Serie A giants from Marseille for around £14 million (£5.2m), the Italian newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport reported yesterday. It said Dugarry would join the Italian champions after the new year and would be ready to face his former club Milan in a league match on 6 January. Dugarry

has a clause in his contract which permits him to leave Marseille at the end of this season for 14 million lire, but the French club would be willing to release him immediately, the Gazzetta said.

Juventus have been scouring the transfer market for a replacement for Alessandro Del Piero, who has torn cruciate ligaments in his left knee.

And Sukur has revealed that he is also considering a move to Juventus from Galatasaray in a transfer which newspapers say is worth a possible £3m.

Palmeiras relish living up to their bad-boy image

BRAZIL

FOR THE second time this season Palmeiras have been accused of violent and unsportsmanlike conduct. On Tuesday, Cruzeiro, their opponents in the Copa Mercosur final, left no one in any doubt as to their feelings. "Palmeiras do not play hard, they play violently, they have been kicking players off the ball for a long time," said the Cruzeiro coach, Levir Culpi.

"They celebrate goals with obscene gestures, provoke our players and, when their team is winning, the ball-boys vanish."

THE team from São Paulo was violent. This could be seen as an overreaction to robust play until you realise that the Palmeiras coach, Luiz Felipe Scolari, has publicly urged his team to commit more fouls.

It could also be seen as a rather foolhardy reaction from Culpi as his team's 3-1 loss in the second leg forced a decider - to be played at Palmeiras.

time on Monday. He succeeded Anatoly Byshovets, sacked this month after five months in charge and six consecutive losses, including three European Championship qualifiers.

Romantsev previously led Russia to the finals of Euro 96 but was dismissed after they gained just one point from three games.

RUSSIA

OLEG ROMANTSEV, the head coach of the champions, Spartak Moscow, took charge of the national team for the second

time on Monday. He succeeded Anatoly Byshovets, sacked this month after five months in charge and six consecutive losses, including three European Championship qualifiers.

Romantsev previously led Russia to the finals of Euro 96 but was dismissed after they gained just one point from three games.

state for sport, Santiago Fisas, said: "I'm not against the idea of regional selections playing friendly fixtures but I don't think it is possible given Spanish legislation, along with the regulations of the International Olympic Committee and international federations, that regional selections can take precedence over a Spanish national team."

The friendly was played before an almost capacity crowd at the Barcelona's Olympic Stadium, with banners demanding sporting independence and "Freedom for Catalonia".

Pichi Alonso, the Catalonia coach, has no doubts about his side's capabilities. "I think we are at the level of national teams like Belgium or Scotland," he said.

SWAZILAND

THE COUNTRY'S police force are having a wage cut to subsidise their team's participation in next year's Confederation of African Football Cup. All 2,500 policemen are to have more than £5 deducted from their next pay packet so their Royal Leopards can play Nkana FC of Zambia in the first round in March.

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Miller makes turkeys of Tigers

BARBARIANS RUGBY no longer matters a fig, unless you happen to relish the opportunity of reminding your former employers that you can actually play a bit. Eric Miller, the Lion who failed to cut the mustard amongst the Tigers of Leicester, reintroduced himself to the Welford Road faithful yesterday afternoon and took immense pleasure in force-feeding Dean Richards, Martin Johnson and company an unpalatable helping of ice-cold turkey.

Eighteen months ago, Miller was the talk of this remarkable sporting town; christened the "new Deano" by a crowd reared on back-row brilliance, he made the Lions tour of South Africa with something to spare and would have started the first Test in Cape Town had

RUGBY UNION

BY CHRIS HEWETT

Leicester 24
Barbarians 38

he not fallen ill 48 hours before kick-off. At which point, his career went into free-fall. His form and fitness dipped. Leicester stopped picking him and his appetite quickly disappeared in the same direction as his confidence.

Hence his decision to cut his losses and head back home to Ireland. It has done him the world of good, clearly. Together with his non-nonsense partners from mainland Europe, Massimo Giovannelli and Jan Machacek, he gave his old club-mates their biggest seasonal

hurry-up since they last tackled the new year sales. Miller's try four minutes into the second half bore the stamp of a genuine footballer and it gave the Barbarians, who spent all of four hours preparing for the game, the launch-pad for a third consecutive victory over their traditional Christmas hosts.

Proudfoot boost for Scotland

SCOTLAND'S HOPES of a successful Five Nations campaign received a boost yesterday as the prop Matt Proudfoot prepared to return to competitive rugby following a neck injury. The front row man is hoping to turn out for Melrose seconds this weekend after three months on the sidelines.

Craig Chalmers, that ever-green outside-half from the Scottish borders, made the other telling contribution, registering 13 points in a flawless display of goal-kicking. The 14,000-plus crowd were not amused by his decision to take the penalty points as Leicester's midfield stumbled offside six minutes

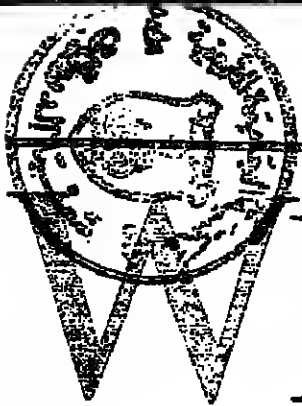
from time - apparently it was not in keeping with the occasion - but as the favourite son of Melrose pointed out later, even Barbarians recognise a main chance when they see one. Leicester might well have notched a victory had their front-line internationals stayed the course, but Johnson and Neil

Back were both gone inside 30 minutes and Richard Cockerill was withdrawn at half-time. Most damagingly of all, Leon Lloyd, who looked a handful on the left wing, left after 26 minutes. "He got a bit of a bump," said Richards, whose diagnostic skills are unlikely to bring about a 21st century revolution in medical science.

In all seriousness, Lloyd looked sharp enough to warrant the once-over from Clive Woodward. The England coach is probably loath to watch any more of his players, having chosen 12 of them in 18 months, but anyone quick enough to give as sharp an opponent as Derek Starks the run-around must have something going for him. Lloyd created an opening try for Back on nine minutes before

finishing beautifully himself five minutes later and Leicester were nowhere near as threatening in his absence.

LEICESTER: Tries: Back, Lloyd, John, Simpson, Cockerill, Simpson, 2. Barbarians: Tries: Evans, Miller, Martin, Jones, Machacek, Giovannelli, Chalmers, 5. Penalties: Chalmers. LEICESTER: 1. Simpson; 2. Cockerill, 3. Foster, 4. Lloyd, 5. Back, 6. G. Murphy, 7. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 8. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 9. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 10. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 11. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 12. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 13. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 14. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 15. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 16. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 17. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 18. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 19. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 20. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 21. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 22. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 23. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 24. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 25. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 26. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 27. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 28. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 29. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 30. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 31. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 32. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 33. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 34. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 35. A. G. G. (A. G. G.), 36. A. G. G. (A. G. 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WEDNESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

Giant Haystacks is dead. Long live wrestling

BY JACK O'SULLIVAN



When Dave "Iron Duke" Lynch attended the funeral of Giant Haystacks earlier this month, many at the Salford graveside thought they had come to bury British wrestling. Haystacks, a brute of a figure standing nearly seven feet tall and weighing in at almost 50 stone, had been the bad man of the ring. During the sport's heyday in the Seventies, stars such as himself could pull in more viewers than *Coronation Street* and even, on one occasion, the FA Cup Final. Just a year before, the old-timers had bid a similar farewell to Big Daddy, Haystacks' great rival, the good guy in this pantomime. He was the wrestler whom the kids and the grannies loved to watch as he hounded opponents off his vast stomach.

The contrast at the funeral between past and present could not have been clearer. "We loved Giant Haystacks," recalls Lynch, "but here was this big, ugly fella being lowered down in this huge coffin by three of his sons. They were normal, good-looking lads about six foot tall. They could have been male models. Although no-one said it, everyone felt this was the end of an era."

The mourners were probably right. The death of traditional British wrestling, which many always suspected to be a thinly disguised joke, has been lingering for a decade, ever since it was dropped from its Saturday afternoon slot on ITV just before the football results. The days when Kent Walton's screaming commentary created near hysteria in the nation's living rooms are long over - today, the only star left is Pat Roche, who as "Bomber", the wrestler in *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, was fortunate in enjoying a television persona denied to his contemporaries starved of screen exposure.

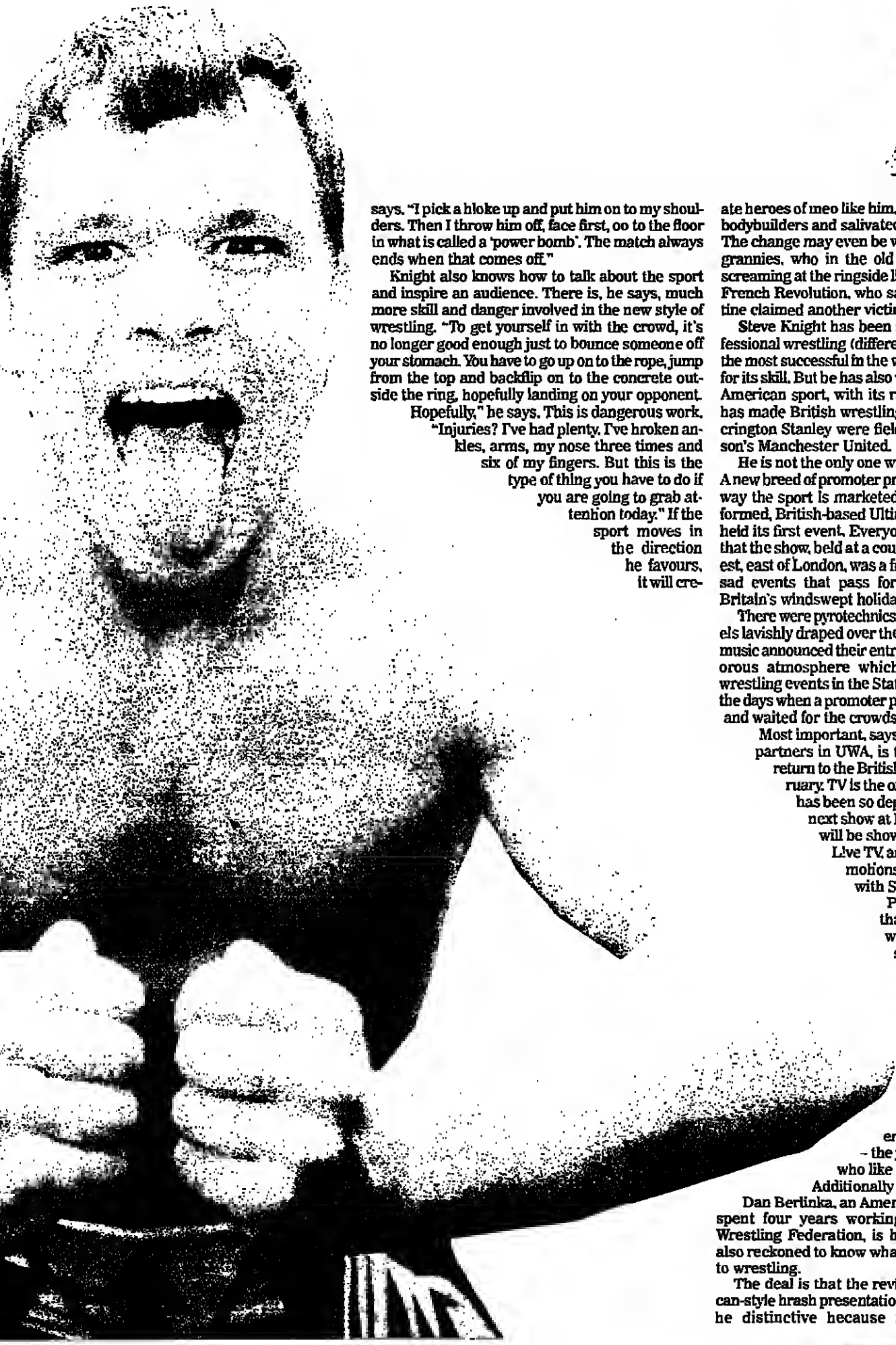
Nevertheless, out of the current demise is springing an extraordinary revival. British wrestling looks set to be the latest craze. Partly the opportunity is there because the appetite for wrestling remains a relatively young one. Ask anyone between the ages of 20 and 45 about wrestling and, more than likely, their eyes will light up with nostalgia for a sport which fascinated many children of all classes, and then just seemed to disappear.

Typically, the names of Mick MacManus (a great grunter) and Kendo Nagasaki (the rather frightening man in the mask) still trip off the tongue. When come happy thoughts of moves such as the Boston Crab and Half Nelson, which were practised repeatedly on younger siblings and which occupy the same memory space as *Dr Who* and *Blue Peter*. It is a space that remains unfilled in middle age, the sanitised *Gladiators* being a poor substitute.

If wrestling takes off again in 1999, it will also be

because of new, ambitious talent, which can barely hide its cootertop for the old-timers. Men such as Steve Knight, whose style and youthful good looks make him widely tipped for stardom as the David Beckham of the new era. He is just 23, 14 stone and 5ft10 tall. His cropped blond hair, blue eyes, muscular physique and a tan fresh from Tenerife combine to make him look very different from the great hulking wrestlers of the Seventies. More like Haystacks' sons than the giant himself. And, in the ring, you don't find this flying fighter embroiled in those boring battles of the Titans, in which two huge old blokes slugged it out, sitting on top of one another, grunting.

Oh no. Dressed in red and yellow leotard and boots, plus tasselled arms and legs, Knight is boyish and athletic, but with a ruthless streak. "I specialise in what I call the 'Knight driver'," he



says, "I pick a bloke up and put him on to my shoulders. Then I throw him off, face first, on to the floor in what is called a 'power bomb'. The match always ends when that comes off."

Knight also knows how to talk about the sport and inspire an audience. There is, he says, much more skill and danger involved in the new style of wrestling. "To get yourself in with the crowd, it's no longer good enough just to bounce someone off your stomach. You have to go up on to the rope, jump from the top and backflip on to the concrete outside the ring, hopefully landing on your opponent. Hopefully," he says, "this is dangerous work."

"Injuries? I've had plenty, I've broken ankles, arms, my nose three times and six of my fingers. But this is the type of thing you have to do if you are going to grab attention today." If the sport moves in the direction he favours, it will create

ate heroes of meo like him, admired by young male bodybuilders and salivated over by young women. The change may even be welcomed by wrestling's grannies, who in the old days could be spotted screaming at the ringside like the *tricotuses* of the French Revolution, who sat knitting as the guillotine claimed another victim.

Steve Knight has been studying Japanese professional wrestling (different from sumo), which is the most successful in the world and much admired for its skill. But he has also watched as the televised American sport, with its razzmatazz and theatre, has made British wrestling look as dated as if Ac-crington Stanley were fielded to play Alex Ferguson's Manchester United.

He is not the only one with an eye on the future. A new breed of promoter promises to transform the way the sport is marketed. In October, the newly formed, British-based Ultimate Wrestling Alliance held its first event. Everyone in the business says that the show, held at a country club in Epping Forest, east of London, was a fresh departure from the sad events that pass for wrestling contests in Britain's windswept holiday camps.

There were pyrotechnics, lasers, and female models lavishly draped over the wrestlers. Thundering music announced their entry, contributing to a glamorous atmosphere which is commonplace for wrestling events in the States. It was a far cry from the days when a promoter put a few ads in the paper and waited for the crowds to turn up.

Most important, says Paul Martin, one of the partners in UWA, is that television cameras return to the British wrestling scene in February. TV is the oxygen of which the sport has been so deprived for a decade. The next show at London's Crystal Palace will be shown on the cable channel Live TV and a deal for further promotions is under negotiation with Sky TV.

Paul Martin confesses that he knows little about wrestling. But given the sport's parlous state he, probably rightly, regards that particular lack of knowledge as a strength.

Martin comes from the world of concert promotion. He knows exactly what is needed to attract the new audience that wrestling needs - the young men and women who like to attend live gigs.

Additionally his business partner, Dan Bertinka, an American TV executive who spent four years working with the US World Wrestling Federation, is highly regarded and is also reckoned to know what turns an audience on to wrestling.

The deal is that the revival will use an American-style trash presentation. British wrestling will be distinctive because it will combine this

Continued on page 2

The late Giant Haystacks, top, and right, new boy Phil Powers

Andrew Burrman

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Labour scandals

Sir: Peter Mandelson's resignation is a refreshing development for a Labour Party which is bedevilled and politically corrupted by the myth of modernisation.

Regardless of what degree of financial or political inpropriety occurred, or of what further revelations ensue, the common perception is that it is unlikely that many of Mandelson's Hartlepool Labour-voting constituents could obtain a loan of £340,000; hence his reticence at the time.

However the main issue is that this transaction and previous scandals such as the Formula One affair all epitomise how the New Labour "election-winning" concept is nothing but a capitulation to the demands of the captains of industry and finance, and to free-market fundamentalism. It reveals that the small clique of business and image conscious New Labour executives who administer the show are unrepresentative of Labour voters and the Labour movement as a whole. As long as they remain at the helm, "misjudgements" like this will be just as endemic in this government as they were in the last.

Tony Blair has given the assurance that although his key modernising ideologue has gone, Mandelson's spectre will remain in New Labour policy. Hopefully though, his departure along with worsening economic problems may start a momentum to reassess Labour on the left of the political spectrum, thus ending this wretched bi-partisan consensus politics which inhibits real arguments and policy alternatives.
NICK VINEHILL
Snettisham, Norfolk

Sir: I am still waiting for someone to explain what Peter Mandelson has actually done wrong (save any possible irregularities in his mortgage application).

The only possible problem with the Robinson loan is an alleged potential conflict of interest. The DTI Permanent Secretary sought to insulate his Secretary of State from the Robinson inquiry on the grounds that he was a fellow minister. So there is already deemed to be a conflict of interest where fellow ministers are concerned.

There is meant to be. These people are in the same party. They are close friends (or at least meant to be). They are colleagues on the same side in the total war that constitutes adversarial political life. There is open loyalty between fellow ministers which makes impartiality not only improbable but impossible. It is not expected to be otherwise. They dine in each other's homes, go on holiday together. We should be amazed if they did not lend each other money, from time to time, as well.

Had the minister borrowed money from anyone other than a fellow minister (or a member of his own family) then the need to declare it would be understandable. As it is, we would not be in the least enlightened by disclosure of loans between senior politicians of the same party. To think otherwise would be naive.
R FOULK
Oxford

Sir: To comply with the convention for naming political scandals, should not the Mandelson affair be called Nottinghamgate?

ALEXANDER KLEANTHOUS
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire

Rail disasters

Sir: While Richard Branson navigated his way through a crisis in the ether above China, his passengers on the 21.30 from Euston to Wolverhampton were also trying to make their way home.

We were heavily delayed outside Bletchley because of a fire and brake failure, but the Virgin guard assured us that buses and taxis would be waiting at Milton Keynes to take us home.

We arrived at Milton Keynes at about 2am. It was freezing, and no buses were in sight. The 300 passengers from the train were left to fight with each other and

drunken night-clubbers for taxis. Our taxi driver said his firm would be charging Virgin approximately £200 for the return journey to Wolverhampton. I estimate that the taxi bill alone will cost £15,000 to £20,000, a sum which will only escalate with refunds and demands for compensation.

While Branson amuses himself by bringing Phineas Fogg to life, the thousands of people who regularly have to travel by train in Britain suffer the harsh reality of his management of our railways. Will the Government take heed - allowing the music man to take over our railways has been a disaster.
Dr PATRICIA MINES
Aberystwyth

Sir: Your Outlook column of 16 December ("Short-changed on Railtrack sale") criticised the National Audit Office report on the privatisation of Railtrack for suggesting that it might have been possible to sell shares in the company in stages rather than all at once. Yet the report demonstrates that this could have been possible.

Top investors in the company confirmed that they had no fundamental objection to participating in a partial share sale. Railtrack shares were clearly attractive to institutions in that they bid for 10 times as many as were available. And where sales have been done in stages, final proceeds have nearly always been higher: in 1991 when National Power and PowerGen were floated ahead of a General Election, and in the face of political opposition, the department was advised not to sell in stages but did so because it could not be sure of getting full value from the initial price. Ultimately, the shares were sold in two tranches, at an additional benefit of £2.3bn to the taxpayer.
GABRIELLE COHEN
National Audit Office
London SW1

Sir: Travel by train is longer possible for anyone who has to arrive by a definite time. Over the

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



Panto Season No 3: Underneath the auditorium of the Northcott Theatre in Exeter, Bow Belle the fairy (Amanda Horlock) takes a break during the first dress rehearsal of 'Dick Whittington'

John Voos

Christmas period travel by rail has been impossible. Close the whole lot, declare a national void day and then start again under completely new management with no compensation. Identify every last Tory involved in privatisation, surcharge them, then imprison them when they cannot pay.
IAN CAMPBELL
Borth, Dyfed

After Saddam

Sir: David Aaronovitch ("Unfortunately, there really was no alternative to the bombing", 22 December) and I A Shapiro (letter, 22 December) say that there is no alternative to bombing Iraq. This is not true. The alternative is to remove Saddam and his regime once and for ever.

The US and Britain should have spent 10 per cent of the bombing cost on Iraqi opposition groups to encourage them to unite to help overthrow Saddam and establish a democratic government.

Bombing Iraq will not harm Saddam. It will only bring misery to the Iraqi people. Saddam will rebuild his arms supplies and his military power, and will continue to do so for years to come. This will also result in more bombings and additional suffering for the Iraqi

people. By this bombing, have we really achieved anything other than the slaughter of innocent Iraqi lives? The only way to remove the weapons of mass destruction is to remove Saddam completely, and this can only be achieved by helping the Iraqi opposition.

Lifting sanctions is an essential part of the help, because hungry people can not fight a brutal regime.
Dr ABDUL-KHALIQ HUSSEIN
Morpeth, Northumberland

Sir: When Tony Blair and Bill Clinton talk of encouraging a new regime in Iraq, most people probably assume this means democracy. This may not be the case.

After the 1991 Gulf conflict, former US Defence Secretary James Schlesinger indicated that the US did not disagree with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, who did not consider democracy appropriate for Saudi Arabia; Saudi Arabia is a deeply repressive country.

The only fully-fledged democracy in the region is Israel, hardly an example Arab states would look to. Democracy itself threatens the existence of all the other regimes in the Middle East. If democracy is appropriate for Iraq, why is it not also appropriate for Saudi Arabia,

or for Algeria, where it would have resulted in a fundamentalist Islamic government.

If not democracy then what? The governments need to define their positions. Would the British public support an alternative regime which was not a democracy?
DAVID COCKBURN
Taunton, Somerset

Sir: George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence, speaking about the arrival in the Gulf next month of the aircraft-carrier HMS *Invincible* said: "It is a big signal: we are not going away." You report that the "floating fortress" can mount air and land attacks, and carries up to 24 aircraft and a crew of 1,200 ("Blair sends carrier to the Gulf", 21 December).

And George Orwell said, in 1984: "In a physical sense war involves very small numbers of people, mostly highly trained specialists, and causes comparatively few casualties. The fighting, when there is any, takes place on the vague frontiers whose whereabouts the average man can only guess at, or round the Floating Fortresses which guard strategic spots on the sea-lanes." "The essential act of war is

destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but the products of human labour. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable. A Floating Fortress, for example, has locked up in it the labour that would build several hundred cargo ships. Ultimately it is scrapped as obsolete, never having brought any material benefit to anybody, and with further enormous labours another Floating Fortress is built. In principle the war effort is always so planned as to eat up any surplus that might exist after meeting the bare needs of the population."

Could Mr Blair have been warning us about Mr Blair?
WILLIAM F LONG
Loughton, Essex

Lesson for lords

Sir: At our peril we ignore the implications of shabby leaders in the USA mentioned by Gavin Esler ("Cruise missiles won't stop the dangers facing US democracy", 19 December). Their President, their Congress and their Senate, now involved in an unseemly constitutional wrangle, are elected. They are also open to a freedom of information culture in their prurient press. Those in the UK who want an entirely elected House of Lords should reflect on that.

There are many experienced, responsible, wise citizens who will decline to stand for election to our second chamber. They will not be ambitious for public status. Their lives may well be blameless but they and their families will not wish to enter on an election process that would lead to total invasion of their privacy by a "wolf pack" from our snide and scurrilous media. The price of service for some of the people we most need could well be too high. We would have nobody but ourselves to blame.
E ASERPELL
Norwich

Giant Haystacks is dead

Continued from page 1
razzmatazz with the type of skills normally seen only in Japan. So, forget Big Daddy and think of the likes of Naseem Hamed dominating the new wrestling world. Ross Hutchinson, of the wrestling fanzine, *Sucker Punch*, thinks a revival is just around the corner. "If people like Paul Martin keep their promises and stick with quality, then it's going to happen. This time, the audience has to feel that it is seeing the real thing. The trouble with the Giant Haystacks era was that if you market something as a joke then no-one will take it seriously."

Phil Powers is another of the would-be stars. Aged 24, with short dark hair, he is superbly fit and good-looking, billed as a favourite with young women and their mums. Like many of the upcoming stars he is based in the south-east, whereas old-style wrestlers like Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks were more often northerners. Powers is convinced that the new style of British wrestling, more athletic, more aggressive, with less of a *Curry On* image, needs the new, glitzy presentation if it is to take off. "If the greasy spoon was selling the finest caviar," he says, "it would not be appreciated in the same way as it is in a fine restaurant."

The trouble, of course, with engineering changes in fashion is that the future is guess work. For those awaiting a breakthrough, sticking with the current wrestling scene is an act of faith. At some events you can be lucky to clear £50 or £60 for a bout. There is, of course, the merchandising on top of that: pictures and T-shirts that people like Big Daddy hawked around long after they had ceased to compete. But the world of holiday camps, where a great deal of wrestling still takes place, is dismal. Especially when you realise that millions of people are watching American wrestling on satellite channels.

Earlier this month, more than 15,000 people were drawn to watch these American TV stars, live, on a rare visit to the London Docklands Arena. Even the hard man of British football, Vinnie Jones, was hired for one bout, playing an enforcer character. It was an event that made the likes of Paul Martin even more sure that a wrestling breakthrough is imminent.

Nevertheless, many people are going to be terribly disappointed if British wrestling throws away this last chance of a revival. Phil Powers works out every day, doing cross-country runs, gymnastics and swimming. But, newly married with two step-children and a baby of his own, he has had to take a job working in a warehouse for a parcel delivery company to get by.

In a couple of years, Phil Powers could be a household name, and rich - or he may still be a nobody. "I would have given up but for the UWA," he confesses. "Now I'm going to give wrestling two more years," he says hopefully. "After that, if it doesn't work out, I'm going back to school, on to university and I'm going to get a proper career. If a revival doesn't happen now, then maybe it's time wrestling went the way of Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy and was laid to rest."

"Iron Duke" Lynch is convinced that Phil Powers will get his big break. At 31, looking threatening with his blond mohican, shaven at the sides, he has kept the faith through the hard times. He even has to put up his own ring for some events. Unable to make a full-time living from boxing, he makes ends meet playing villains and thugs as a TV extra.

Despite all of this, a man who just said farewell to Giant Haystacks is full of hope. "You can look at Britain, and the lack of televised British matches, and say wrestling is dead here. And then you see how well the sport is doing in America, thanks to being on the box and you say to yourself, 'That can work here, too!'"

IN BRIEF

history. In what sense can anyone in the last 1,000 years have been "British" before the Union of 1707? Shakespeare was a great English writer, who wrote about "Britain" only twice, in *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*. He would have found the idea that he was "British" absurd.
ALAN MACCOLL
St Andrews, Fife

Sir: I was dismayed to read that, at 29, I will soon be too old to appreciate popular culture

and music, as the tracks chosen as "anthems of the year" by Radio 1 listeners are unlikely to mean anything to "anyone over 30" ("Massive Attack sees off old guard", 29 December). I needn't have worried. Reading on, I was relieved to discover that most of those who made the list were about my age (Oasis, Radiohead, Nirvana), while some were positively vintage (REM and Madonna). So I can delay that trip to Littlewoods for my elasticated jeans for a few years.
L J WRIGHT
London N22

Sir: Anna Freeman (letter, 26 December) is right to deplore the continuing analysis of myths about the star of Bethlehem. It should be noted that the "wise men" who came "from the east" said they had seen the star "in the east" and had followed it. In that case they were heading not for Bethlehem, but Japan.
MAURICE HILL
Alicante, Spain

Sir: The use of the term "British" in Radio 4's "British personality of the millennium" (report, 29 December) shows a depressing ignorance of

The goalkeeper's fear of the genetically modified pig

IN THESE last two days of the year I want to take your mind off all the bad news of 1998 by directing it to all the bad news of 1999. Yes, it's Old Miles' Almanack time again, as we gaze gloomily into the crystal ball and see the major events of the coming year...

January
As Project New Labour falters, with the departure of chief architect Peter Mandelson, rumours abound of a new movement within Government ranks called Project Old Labour.

New Year's Honour List announced: people getting knight-hoods all say "It's a wonderful surprise and shock honour", even though they've known about it for months. Only real surprise in List? Sir Peter Mandelson.

Scientists grow a human hand on a pig.

As President Bill Clinton commences his impeachment trial, he tries to divert attention by bombing Baghdad again.

Richard Branson announces plans for new attempt to circle world in balloon. He will take off in 1999 and complete the trip in 2000, thus becoming the first person to take two centuries to go round the world.

A new miracle sex aid is launched on the American market, called Niagara. It has the opposite effect to that of Viagra: it removes sexual desire from men and gives them the urge to help with the washing up. Sales are moderate to begin with.

Rain, floods and wind. M4 under water. Global warming blamed.

February
Project Old Labour gains strength. Robin Cook and John Prescott emerge as leaders. Their claim is that New Labour wins elections but Old Labour runs governments.

Second human hand is grown on pig. Scientists say the idea is to train Percy the pig as goalkeeper. Cornish Tourist Board announces there are now no hotel bedrooms left in Cornwall for solar eclipse in August and pleads with tourists to go elsewhere.

Sales of Niagara, the sexual depressant, start to boom. It turns out that many American women are buying it secretly to put in husbands' food and drink.

Ferocious snow, ice and frost in Britain. East Anglia splits off from Britain and floats away to sea. Global cooling blamed.



MILES KINGSTON
Percy keeps a clean score sheet, despite protests that he now takes the field wielding five hands

March
New best-seller from Bill Bryson: *Notes from My Last Book*, a col-

lection of pieces which have previously been serialised from previous books.

Percy the Pig turns out to friendly football match between Steve Jones's Geneticists XI and Richard Dawkins's All Star Atheists. He keeps a clean score sheet, despite protests that he now takes the field wielding five hands.

Champagne industry, desperately overstocked, puts out rumour that there may be none left by millennium. Sales perk up.

Frank Sinatra comes back from the dead for surprise concert tour Warmest March on record. Richard Branson balloon emissions blamed.

Congresswomen involved in his impeachment trial. Angriely he denies it and drops a few bombs on Libya. Blair declares himself right behind Clinton.

Richard Branson announces that when his balloon goes round the world from century to century, he will be dressed as Mr Darcy from *Pride and Prejudice*.

New smash hit all-girl group called Hello Girls sweeps to top of charts, meets Prince Charles, squabbles, splits and disbands.

Pregnancy rate in the USA takes a dramatic tumble; success of Niagara is blamed.

Norfolk spotted going through the Bering Strait. Could be the first English county to sail round world. No sign of Suffolk. Fears expressed.

May
Gordon Brown makes bid for premiership but fails to reach reserve price.

Alex Ferguson buys Percy the Pig to replace now departed Peter Schmeichel.

Cornish champagne stocks exhausted; dangerously low in Devon.

June
Percy the Pig leaves full-time football and gets his own late-night TV chat show.

First Iraqi bombs start to drop on Washington DC.

Norfolk makes landfall off Chile. Many Chileans take day trip to Norfolk from Santiago. Verdict: quite nice but hit boring, really.

Second half of 1999 coming tomorrow!

THE INDEPENDENT

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A search for a hero that helps us to define ourselves

THE TODAY programme's poll for "person of the millennium" seems over-optimistic: how can 1,000 years of human endeavour possibly be condensed into a single name, however stellar? And how can one limit that search to inhabitants of the British Isles?

But the poll is not as ridiculous as that first reaction assumes: one can understand how it has captured the public imagination as more than a diverting parlour game. As we approach the millennium we will come increasingly to consider who and what we are. Searching for a single representative of our achievements is a part of this process. The millennium celebrations will mean nothing if they do not give us the opportunity to redefine ourselves.

British heroes will inevitably resonate more than those from other shores, however important their achievements. Many of those voting have preferred Winston Churchill for this reason. There is no doubt that he stood out as a brave leader in the perilous late summer of 1940: he saved Britain from an ignominious "peace" with Germany. But is he really the hero for a whole millennium?

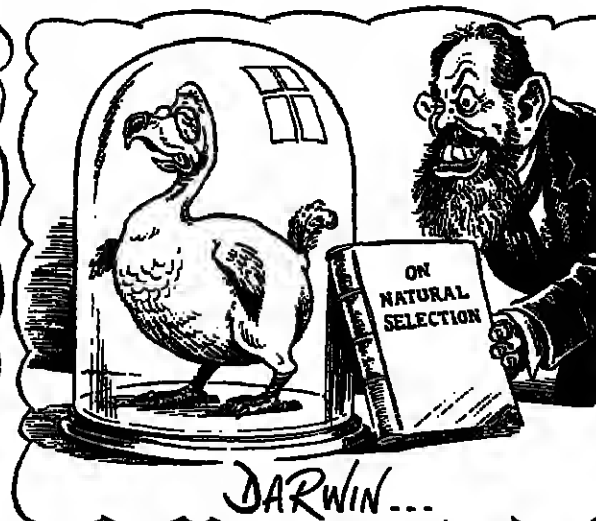
Britain has had other saviours. It is partly because his deeds are comparatively recent that we so lionise Churchill. Fewer now remember Queen Elizabeth I's diplomacy, which brought England relatively unscathed through an era of internecine religious war, and defied imperial Spain with England's puny resources.

Remembering her highlights the shortage of women among the candidates. Elizabeth herself is so far the first woman in the list, unjustifiably standing rather alone in the field of politics. The feminists of the early part of this century strove to effect the greatest political upheaval since the establishment of parliamentary sovereignty itself. It was they who finally secured the principle that all mentally able adults should be entitled to vote, an ideal that civil rights movements the world over were to mobilise.

The Pankhurst sisters and their suffragette campaign played a key role in securing political rights for British women. Mary Wollstonecraft's writings served as an inspiration for a generation of radical women. Such campaigners should have attracted more votes.

We should also consider those from beyond our borders, if only to provide a sense of perspective. The great Mogul Emperor Akbar conquered much of the known world, and attempted to unite his conquests under one ecumenical religion. More recently, Gandhi and Mandela have brought succour to oppressed peoples. Britons should remember how lucky they are: they have secured their liberties without requiring such charismatic leadership.

Gutenberg gave birth to the modern media by inventing the moving typeface. Galileo, by insisting that Earth was one planet among many, altered man's sense of place



MAN OF THE MILLENNIUM

in the physical universe. Martin Luther forced the medieval Church to re-consider its secular purpose. He did not intend to, but laid the groundwork for the rise of rational and worldly inquiry. After such men, nothing – and nothing in Britain – would be the same again. Their names are instructive of the rise of northern Europe as opposed to the Mediterranean and Arab world which had dominated the first millennium, shaped by Jesus, Constantine and Muhammad.

These names also demonstrate how Japan and China, ancient civilisations forged on Confucian thinking, have been isolated and in eclipse for much of this millennium, losing their head-start over Western civilisations.

Shakespeare's presence in the list is a warning not to focus on politicians, scientists and philosophers. The joy still imparted by the music of Mozart, the plays of Chekhov or the novels of Proust loom large for many. But there is nothing wrong with settling on a figure from public rather than artistic life; civic duty needs every

encouragement in an age deeply sceptical about politics. If we are to accept the Radio 4 rules, we can narrow the field to three candidates, whose thought was so profound as to alter the entire intellectual world. Charles Darwin, whose work was scientific, but seeped into religious, philosophical and political discourse too. Adam Smith, a Scot in a list failing to reflect their vital contribution to British history, established modern economics as a discipline, claimed as inspiration by economists as different as Marx to Milton Friedman.

The man who combines all that we are looking for is often overlooked. His name is Benjamin Franklin. As a scientist, he tamed lightning: the lightning conductor was his brainchild, allowing man to build unafraid of the elements. Thunder and lightning had belonged to God: now they belonged to man. Technological advance since Franklin's time, from computers to space travel, has relied on the electricity he harnessed.

His confidence was remarkable. He became one of the

most fervent of Americans once the British connection was irretrievable. As a letter-writer, his erudition is legendary. The first of the "natural men" whose bourgeois mores were to come to dominate the globe, he declined to wear a wig while ambassador in Paris. He was self-made, a printer and publisher, the first of a new breed.

He was a master of the modern political art of compromise, striving to avoid the breach with the mother country. He conceived the compromise between the rights of states and the popular vote, and the two-chamber Congress containing both a Senate and House of Representatives, that made the US possible.

Franklin replaced religious absolutes with what was practical, an American injunction that has since become world orthodoxy. And by happy coincidence, he was born a loyal colonist – a Briton through and through. The next millennium will probably uncover as its hero a woman born in Lagos, São Paulo, or Nanking. But it is Franklin we humbly submit as person of this millennium.

Don't blame the spin-doctor – blame his boss, Mr Brown

IF CHARLIE Whelan did not exist, it would be necessary for the Government to invent him. This convenient Beelzebub has been identified as the source of the revelations of Peter Mandelson's home-loan arrangements without anything as vulgar as proof. "The Government will not be held to ransom by one little oik," was Number 10's word to that newspaper of New Labour record, *The Sun*. The Blairites always call Mr Whelan an oik. It is practically a registered code.

So justice must be seen to be done and wild Charlie's ill-kempt head must roll to atone the crime committed against Mr Mandelson. Clearly, the Prime Minister's advisers had prepared the way to the scaffold. Hardened lobby correspondents, who could go 12 rounds with a boa constrictor after a long lunch, came over faint at the memory of Charlie's rough and ready techniques. "Enemies were 'bolloxed' to their face in profane language... Journalists who transgressed were telephoned at home to be told that their stories were 'crap'," wrote one columnist. The horror, the horror: One pictured sweat-drenched hacks whimpering in fear because someone called them at home and swore at them.

True, when it comes to briefing against his enemies Mr Whelan has enough previous convictions to keep a whole army of probation officers occupied. He is all the usual suspects rolled into one. But it is a little too easy to pin the blame for this ragged state of affairs solely on one old dog who is, in the Westminster grand scheme of things, a minor player.

Mr Whelan is nothing more and nothing less than the most public symbol of the undigested tension between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Were relations between the Prime Minister and his Chancellor not so fraught, he would not have been free to ply his mischievous trade in the first place. Don't blame the monkey – look to the organ grinder.

If, as Alastair Campbell, John Prescott, Jack Cunningham, Uncle Tom Cobley and all suggest, Mr Whelan briefed the journalist Paul Routledge against Peter Mandelson, then he did so because he knew that this was what his master wanted. Indeed, he was behaving exactly as he had done the last time he served up to Mr Routledge touching details of Mr Brown's unhappiness at the manner in which Mr Blair had snatched the leadership from him.

Mr Whelan is daft but not stupid. Detonating another powerful charge at a target as well protected as Peter Mandelson was a high-risk enterprise and not one which he would have undertaken single-handedly.

The real reason for the discord is and always has been the unclarified nature of the relationship between Mr Brown and Mr Blair. Like mediaeval knights, they have allowed their minions to go to war against one another while preserving a serene countenance and giving generously to the Church. The whole business is fetid with pretence. Nothing could be more amusing – or soul-destroying, depending on your view – than Mr Mandelson and Mr Brown fencing each other now with showy niceness.



ANNE MCELVOY
Charlie Whelan is just the most public symbol of the undigested tension between Blair and his Chancellor

As connoisseurs of feuds will tell you, this is the most potent weapon by far. When I heard that Mr Brown had called Mr Mandelson five times to tell him how sorry he was for his trouble and that Mr Mandelson had been very grateful, I prayed for both their souls. It is often said that Mr Blair and Mr Brown have a close working relationship and that rumours of a rift are therefore unfounded. But the real story of the two men is far more tortuous, complex and destructive than outright liking or not liking.

They are both architects of New Labour, but their views differ profoundly of why a reformed party is necessary and how its evolution will proceed. The Brownites believe in the Labour Party, as a cultural entity and a continuum with the past. They celebrate the memory of the late

John Smith, who was a decent and kindly man, but no political mould-breaker. Ask a disciple of Mr Brown's whether Smith would have won the 1997 election if he had lived and they will reply without hesitation that he would have done so and made an excellent Prime Minister. They would have preferred to see a traditional product of the Labour party in Number 10 than the confident outsider there today.

Natural-born Blairites feel differently. Their fierce loyalty to Tony stems from a visceral belief that neither Mr Smith nor Mr Brown could have constructed a political force with such overwhelming appeal to the middle-classes and driven the Conservative party to the margins of relevance. This theory that Mr Blair is somehow exceptional irks Mr Brown – the more so since the Chancellor has the more classical political intellect.

Yet it is Mr Blair who has the keener instinct for power and more innate understanding of what the country's hopes and fears are. I do not know whether the Chancellor will ever come to terms with this uncomfortable fact of life. A lot of his operations – the cultivation of Mr Robinson, the deployment of Mr Robinson's wealth and the creation of closely-knit court around the Treasury – suggest that he cannot resist squirrelling away favours and political debts for the day when he can bid once again to lead the Labour Party.

Harbouring this dream is not wrong in itself. Allowing it to contaminate his dealings with close colleagues is. Mr Brown does not respect

– or even recognise – the distinction. The problem for those who wish to loosen Mr Brown's clenched grip on old resentments is that most of the Labour Party, in the country and in Parliament, and the vast majority of the Cabinet consider him to be a decent man, driven to the edge of mania by the disappointment he suffered in the leadership race. There is no appetite for a show-down between Mr Blair and Mr Brown which would end in the humiliation – or even the removal – of the Chancellor. The Prime Minister knows that it would undermine his appeal and authority if they are seen to be too hard on Gordon.

For all the appearance of being a ruthless, lean fighting force, New Labour is an emotionally supercharged and rather vulnerable group of people, unable to stop scratching at old scars. It has its own sentimentalism, as acute as anything the old socialists with their banners and slogans had to offer. Mr Blair stands aloof of this, but knows that it matters and that the illusion of warmth and friendship must be maintained at the top of the party, however viciously reality bites.

So Charlie Whelan has become the lightning conductor, diverting the rage and resentment that should more properly fall on Mr Brown. The reason the spin-doctor will probably have to go is not because he was the author of the leak. He may well not have been. Nor is because he exceeded his master's brief. It is because he fulfilled it too well. The sacrifice of Charlie is intended to end the tribal massacres of the last week. When he is gone, the *cassus belli* will fester on.

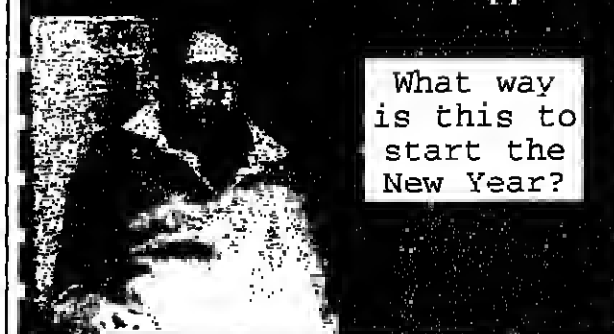
QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's a topsy-turvy world and a topsy-turvy game."
David Lloyd,
England cricket coach

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilisation."
Ralph Waldo Emerson,
American essayist

EMERGENCY Winter Appeal



What way is this to start the New Year?

Cold, homeless and alone

Hundreds of young people, from across the UK, will come to us over the next few weeks – the coldest of the winter. Christmas – a time of 'family togetherness' – is also when many young people are thrown out of home. Without immediate help homelessness can soon become a way of life – and cause of death.

Alone in London runs a unique service to help young lives shattered by family breakdown. Right now our Crisis Counselling and Family Mediating Teams are working flat out to ensure these young people do not become permanently homeless. Starting with a hot meal and help to find emergency accommodation we take practical steps to reconcile young people with their families or support them in starting a life away from home – secure from the cold and danger of the streets of London.

* £30 could help 1 young person
* £270 could help 9 young people

I will give ☐ £30 ☐ £270 ☐ £1000 My choice £_____ to save young people from homelessness (Cheque to Alone in London).

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms
Address
Postcode
I will give by Access/Visa/AmEx/CAF Card
No.
Signature Date
Return to: Guyon Quiller, (LD1), Director, Emergency Winter Appeal, Alone in London, FREEPOST LON14005, LONDON WC1X 9BL.
Registered Charity No 280027

Help put shattered lives back together.

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
Australian comment on the Sydney-Hobart yacht race tragedy

THE HAZARDOUS conditions during the Sydney-Hobart race have extracted a terrible toll in terms of lives lost, sailors injured, and boats crippled, some of them probably beyond repair. Civilian and military rescue personnel were mobilised in the biggest rescue operation at sea in a long time. So, more lives were put at risk in order to save those whose yachts had been disabled and who therefore could not save themselves. And through all this the

Cruising Yacht Club in Sydney would say only that, as the race rules stand, "the final decision to continue racing rests with the individual skippers to ensure the safety of their vessel and crew".

The starts of the Melbourne to Hobart and Melbourne to Devonport yacht races were sensibly delayed because of the weather. The Sydney to Hobart yacht race should have been delayed also. If the rules don't allow for this, then the

Cruising Yacht Club should change the rules.
The Age

EVEN FOR those thousands of landlubbers left standing and

staring from the Sydney Heads, listening to the radio for the latest fleet positions, vicariously sharing the pleasures and perils of the race through the crews, it is plain that sail-

ing is special. Despite the introduction of sophisticated gadgetry it remains fascinatingly, frighteningly elemental. Wind. Water. Human strength and skill. And, yes, courage.

Whatever happens – worse, whoever may die – almost all those who survive will resume the perennial struggle between sailor and sea. As those involved in the race explain, lives are not unnecessarily endangered, but there will always be risks. And, for so

long as there are waves and winds, there will always be men and women willing to run those risks.
Sydney Morning Herald

THE IMAGE of Bruce Guy's abandoned yacht will haunt this race forever. The two who died (the skipper, whose heart gave out; Phil Skeggs, drowned after the boat capsized) had to be left on board as their crewmates were rescued.
The Australian

RIGHT
OF REPLYHOWARD
DAVIES

The secretary general of the British Air Transport Association responds to reports that airline safety will be affected by the millennium bug

THERE IS a lot of conjecture concerning the impact of the coming of the year 2000 on computer systems which support essential services. There can, however, be no doubt that the year 2000 will happen, and airlines must be ready to meet the challenge.

Modern aircraft and ground support services such as air traffic control systems, reservation and baggage handling systems, are heavily dependent on computer support for their operations. Airlines have been aware that there is a potential for some problems with these systems, and there is a shared responsibility with suppliers to ensure that these are addressed and resolved where necessary. Indeed, some airlines commenced some initial work on this as long as three years ago.

In addition, the worldwide study already being undertaken by the International Air Transport Association, in order to determine readiness of airport infrastructure, is an example of collective international co-operation.

So where does this leave the travelling public? UK airlines working with others, including government departments, are well aware of the possible implications of the "millennium bug" and are working on solutions to resolve difficulties which may arise. Some airlines have already indicated that they will not be flying on the eve, and into the early hours, of the millennium.

The arrival of the year 2000 may give rise to some disruption to normal services, but premature actions – such as the cross-party committee's list of "unsafe" airlines and airports – unnecessarily confuse the issue.

Airlines are committed to the safety of passengers and crew, and the travelling public can be assured that airlines will evaluate all the options before deciding exactly what course of action to take.

At present we are working on the premise that worldwide operations will continue as normal, but the decision as to whether to continue to operate, or indeed restrict operations to certain destinations will be taken at the appropriate time as further evidence is gained and the picture becomes clearer.

Ultimately individual airlines, taking into account all the factors at play, will make their own decision as to what they will do to ensure the safety of passengers in the light of the millennium bug.

Forget the old feuds and save the economy



KEN LIVINGSTONE
The fall-out from Tony Blair's election as leader may be with us for a generation or two yet

AS YOU might have guessed, the phone lines have been busy between Labour MPs over Christmas as we analysed the latest casualties from the enduring bitterness of the Labour leadership contest of 1994. People outside politics most probably think it's all a bit sick to have people still settling scores over events almost half a decade old. People in politics seem to have exceptionally long memories for every snub and slight, and there's no greater snub than being denied the leadership of a political party that you believed was rightfully yours.

The general consensus amongst colleagues I spoke to was that the recent debt-settling has been so damaging to the Government as a whole, that everyone may now draw a line under the events of the past. I fear my colleagues are allowing their wishes to cloud their critical faculties. My clearest lesson in how long people can hold a grudge dates back to 1971 when, as a newly elected Lambeth councillor, I sat next to Minnie Kidd, an old time right winger from Clapham Labour Party. I can no longer remember what minor position was the subject of

contention but I was amazed to see that Minnie Kidd was voting for the left wing candidate against an equally old right winger who was also from Clapham Labour Party. When I challenged her on her remarkable hit of cross voting she replied with hard determination: "He didn't vote for me to go to Labour Party conference in 1951!" If you're still settling scores over who didn't go to

Labour Party conference 36 years on then I suspect the fall-out from Tony Blair's election as Labour leader may be with us for a generation or two yet.

For me the most appalling aspect of this whole affair is the amount of energy that has been put into party in-fighting to the neglect of the real duty of getting macro economic policy right. When I compare the amount of effort that must have gone into the events before Christmas with the inadequacy that underlies the Treasury pre-Budget report I get quite angry.

The pre-Budget report claims that the economy will grow by between 1 to 1.5 per cent based on an increase in personal and household consumption of between 1.75-2.25 per cent in 1999. The report presumes that the economic slow-down will not lead to an increase in the level of unemployment sufficient to put downward pressure on the growth of real wages. Whilst this may be optimistic, the Government can always affect individual income via tax changes and social transfers so in principle this target could be achieved. The real error in the Budget

forecast is in the area the Government cannot control, such as trade, and will not control – investment. Brown's report predicts that fixed investment will rise from between 1.75-2.25 per cent next year. This is just rubbish. It simply is not credible to suggest that fixed investment will grow almost twice as rapidly as GDP (gross domestic product) as it is one of the clearest features of the business cycle that fluctuations in investment are greater than those in GDP. Fixed investment invariably rises much faster than GDP during the upswing of the business cycle and falls more rapidly during the downswing. As we are clearly in the downswing of the business cycle, fixed investment will rise even less than GDP in the coming year. In fact, the figures had already turned downwards by the second quarter of 1998 – declining by 1.4 per cent compared with the first quarter.

If Gordon Brown's advisors are unaware of the basic relationship between investment and GDP they are even less well informed on the question of the impact of trade on Britain. Gordon's report claimed that the worsening of Britain's trade

gap will only cut 1.25 per cent from our GDP in 1999. Up until the second quarter of 1998, exports of British goods and services rose by 4 per cent, but this was a dramatic decline from the peak of 9.5 per cent in the third quarter of 1997, following the impact of high interest rates and an overvalued pound; the surge of cheap imports from Asia, as well as the slow-down in the whole global economy.

Unfortunately for Gordon's predictions the decline of the value of the pound has been too slow due to continuing high interest rates. This reflects the Treasury's failure to sufficiently tighten fiscal policy in the Government's first year, so putting pressure on the Bank of England to force up interest rates.

Taking all these factors, along with a sharper deceleration in world GDP, it is clear that Gordon's predictions for GDP are too optimistic for both investment and trade. Even if we make the optimistic assumption that fixed investment is merely flat in 1999 and that the deterioration of net trade is 1 per cent of GDP then this gives GDP growth for next year of zero. But the

risk is on the downside. It is more likely that fixed investment will fall and that net trade will deteriorate more rapidly than Gordon expects. If this is the case then the economy will slip into recession. But if there is a more rapid than expected recovery in Asia and Japan these figures would improve, but equally a devaluation in China or Brazil, or a collapse on Wall Street, would dramatically worsen these figures.

Declining investment will lethally undermine our welfare-to-work programme and even the optimistic scenario of zero growth could mean the loss of up to 2,000 seats on Labour councils in May if the downswing reaches its low point before the local elections. We are handing our opponents for the Welsh and Scottish elections a dagger aimed at our heartlands.

My prediction for 1999 is that on the morning of Friday, 7 May defeated Labour candidates all over Britain will be colourfully expressing the view that a bit more effort should have gone into getting the British economy right, and a little less into pursuing the feuds of leadership battles past.

Can immoral artists produce great works? Discuss (with examples)



DAVID LISTER
Curling up with a good book is not the same thing as curling up with the author

IT'S A traumatic business being a female student in Edinburgh these days. Two days ago a bust of Arthur Koestler at Edinburgh University – where his bequest of £500,000 set up a chair in parapsychology – was removed from public display for "security reasons" after female students reported "feeling uneasy under its gaze".

Great novelists and philosophers can have that effect on young people approaching exams. But in this case it was more a glint in the sculpture's eye. Koestler has fallen victim to the curse of biography. His private life is damned in a recent book. Thus his works and literary reputation must be damned too.

We have tended to take a lenient view of great artists indulging in sexual activity. But a new rash of revelations have moved on from sex to sexual politics. And here the issue is not so clean cut.

Where Sir Richard Burton's wife, for years damned as a wet towel to her husband, is reconstituted as his saviour in a new joint biography just out, a television documentary to come out later this month does the opposite for Clara Schuman. Once portrayed as her husband's guardian angel, the director claims she destroyed his best work and left him alone in his asylum at the end.

Once biography moves into the bedroom, who is safe? What if a great artist was guilty of sexual harassment? What if he were a rapist?

The last is particularly pertinent. A biography of Koestler, the supposedly great humanitarian and champion of civil liberties in his fiction, exposes him as a serial rapist. Jill Craigie, the novelist wife of Michael Foot, confirms how Koestler several decades ago abused her hospitality, hurled her to the floor in her own home, and raped her.

The biography claims that rape

music produced. Terry Eagleton, the Oxford, post-structuralist academic, is one who believes the text is all and despairs of "the English mania for biography".

It is a British weakness, he says, that we seem less interested in ideas than in the sexual habits of those who had them. "The narratives we relish are not fictions, but the real-life stories of fiction-makers."

The female students of Edinburgh will have to avert their eyes from the newly suspect gazes of the following: George Orwell, we recently learned, shopped communists to the intelligence services. Shakespeare, to the bizarre outrage of some feminists, left his wife the home's second-best bed in his will. The much loved but adulterous composer, Janacek, was a stinker to his mistress, her newly published diaries reveal. Einstein's theory of relativity did not include being true to the relatives. He not only had an affair, but it was with a Russian spy. So that should create some much needed space on the bookshelves and CD racks. Gets rid of a few city centre statues too. And the BBC can expect a demo by militant feminists outside Broadcasting House if the *Today* programme makes Shakespeare its man of the millennium.

Despite the presumptuous theories now current about how he treated his wife, the great thing about Shakespeare is that he never gave an interview, appeared on a chat show, wrote an autobiography or even a programme note. We have to judge his plays on their merits.

The massive irony in the literary reevaluation following revelations about the author (or bust removal as it might come to be known) is that we only read a literary biography in the first place because we have been impressed by a book and want to know more about its author. To



The controversial Arthur Koestler in 1980, with his wife Cynthia

then reject the virtues we first noted in the book because we discover that the author was a less than perfect human being may have moral worth; it certainly has no aesthetic or academic worth. No one would suddenly find a much-loved building ugly because of a negative biography of the architect. A work of literature or a piece of music are no less worthy of objective judgement.

And yet I have to admit it is hard not to have a problem with Koestler. Had he written detective stories, then his appalling attitude towards women would probably not affect one's critical appraisal of them. However, it does become a little dif-

ficult to read *Darkness at Noon*, his sensitive and distressing portrayal of life under Stalin's torturers, without a feeling that he was no slouch at inflicting pain, trauma and distress himself.

But *Darkness at Noon* was a work of fiction. Koestler was not Thomas Jefferson, who preached liberty from a public platform. And even revelations about Jefferson do not demean the essence of his message. Once published, a novel transcends its author; its message and theme transcend its creator's private life. If not, then where do we stop? Do we dismiss the melancholic glamour of Graham Greene's anti-heroes be-

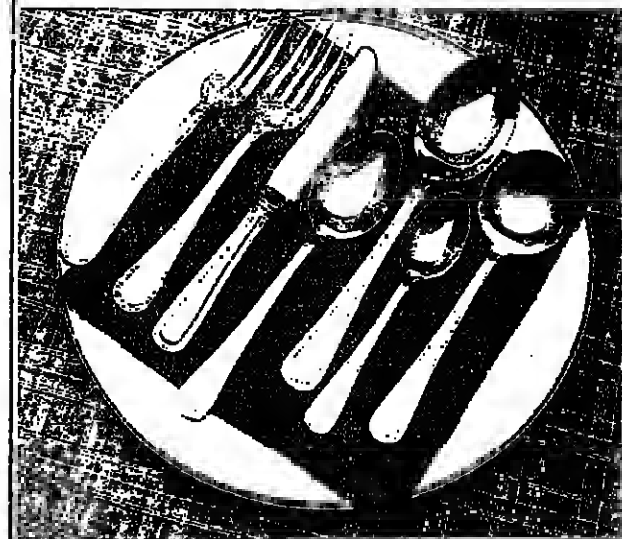
cause the latest biography of him reveals that, into his sixties, he never travelled without his teddy bear?

Artistic creations must be used and judged in their own vacuum, free from their creators' weaknesses, moral failings, even criminal acts. It is not that long a road from removing busts to burning books.

Perhaps the students of Edinburgh should replace the bust and put underneath it the words: "Curling up with a good book is not the same as curling up with the author." What matters is the work produced. Great artists don't have to be nice. Very often they were, and are, cussed, selfish and hell to live with.

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PANDORA

PANDORA'S READERS are responding in massive numbers to Tuesday's plea to help Tony Blair choose his New Year's resolution. Predictably, suggestions range from the inspirationally sober to the entertainingly absurd.

For example, Gordon Cann, a retired teacher from Bournemouth, rang to propose that the Prime Minister "resolve for one year to abolish spin doctors, three-line whips and restore the public's faith in the democratic process. In other words, take a risk." In a rhetorical vein, Mustafa Kundili, a student from Yorkshire, wants Tony to resolve "to stop using the words 'new', 'you know' and 'like' in every statement". Playwright Brian Behan, brother of the late Brendan and a frequent correspondent with Pandora, struck a grim note with his proposal: "Blair should hang himself, after turning himself in as a war criminal first. I would stretch his neck myself."

On a rather more whimsical note, Iris Jones-Morrison, a London marketing executive, suggests that Tony should "make a resolution to bring Roy Hattersley back into the Cabinet".

More fluff balls from the rich tapestry of Pandora's readership tomorrow.

A DEDICATED site on the Web is running nothing but anagrams of "Peter Mandelson". The most compelling, to date, reads "lean modern pest".

CHRISTMAS INVARIABLY means the resurrection of Raymond Briggs's Snowman character in some form or other. This year, a grand production of *The Snowman* is being staged at the Peacock Theatre in London's West End. Briggs, however, has so far failed to attend any performances, despite a seat being reserved for him by the producers.

Yesterday he assured Pandora that he would be going in the next few weeks and dismissed any suggestion that he was bored with his Snowman creation, which is now two decades old.

"I'm quite delighted that the production is on. Obviously I wouldn't want to get involved with designing a new production, or making another film of it. You have to move on."

Briggs said. He added: "The Snowman has proved itself to be something of a mini-industry. You could say it has snowballed."

IN THE Middle Ages, there was a great demand for holy relics. Little has changed in today's age of celebrity worship. Some months ago Pandora reported on the Internet auction of John Lennon's toilet, and the growing market in celebrity porcelain.

Now it appears the relic market is, well, softening a little, with the recent announcement of the forthcoming sale – on the Web – of a pair of green silk knickers once worn by Barbra Streisand. Meanwhile, the search goes on for Brian Jones's toothbrush.

"COMPLETE AND utter rubbish," was the reaction of the Duchess

of York's press spokeswoman, Kate Waddington, when Pandora rang her yesterday to check out an outlandish piece of gossip published by a New York tabloid on Tuesday.

Its claim was that Fergie had spent \$10,000 (just over £8,000) on servants, champagne and food while celebrating Christmas with her sister Jane and family – then forwarded the bill to Prince Andrew and jumped on a plane to go skiing in Italy with Count Gaddo della Gheradesca.

"She had a normal Christmas lunch with her sister's family at Wood Farm. Their father joined them for the day," Waddington insisted. "There's no question of sending the bill anywhere else. She's certainly not going skiing in the Dolomites, because she's flying to New York to spend New Year with Weight Watchers."

DON'T GET too excited when you see John Travolta's (pictured) name at the top of the billings for the new *World War II* epic, *The Thin Red Line*, directed by Terrence Malick, and based on the James Jones novel. "I'm only in it for five minutes," Travolta said recently. "If you get up for popcorn, I'm out of there."

David Manners

DAPPER AND handsome, David Manners was a serviceable leading man whose screen career was confined entirely to the Thirties, during which he was in great demand. He made 37 films between 1930 and 1936, and played romantic lead to such stars as Barbara Stanwyck, Katharine Hepburn, Kay Francis and Constance Bennett.

Though he was excellent as the hero-worshipping young officer in *Journey's End* and the blind man who falls in love with a faith-healer in *The Miracle Woman*, it is for his roles in three classic horror films - *Dracula* with Bela Lugosi, *The Mummy* with Boris Karloff, and *The Black Cat* with both Lugosi and Karloff - that he is best remembered, and a few years ago he commented on the interest being shown in him by movie magazines and historians. "Most of today's fans are 14-year-old worshippers of the horror films - my only claim to movie fame."

Claiming descent from William the Conqueror, Manners was born Rauff de Ryther Duan Acklom in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1902 (some sources state 1900 or 1905). The family tree of his mother, Lilian Manners, included Lady Diana Cooper and the Duke of Rutland, while the Ackloms included the writers Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, WHL Haring and Morley Aklom - Manners himself would take up writing later in his career.

He was educated at Collegiate Grammar School in Windsor, Ontario, and earned a degree in forestry at the University of Toronto, where he also studied acting under Bertram Forsyth, who ran the Hart House Theatre, where Manners made his stage debut in the title role of Euripides' *Hippolytus*. After graduation, his jobs included foreman of a lumber camp in Canada and salesman in a London antique shop. When his parents moved to the United States, Manners decided to try his luck in the New York theatre.

In 1924 he joined Basil Sydney's touring company; his roles included Bezano the bareback rider in *He Who Gets Slapped* and Solveig's father in *Peer Gynt*. He made his Broadway debut in *Dancing Mothers* (1924), a comedy starring Helen

Hayes. The production's stage manager was George Cukor, who years later would direct Manners in the film *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932).

The actor's first film role was a prestigious one. James Whale had directed both the London and New York productions of R.C. Sherriff's powerful anti-war play *Journey's End*, and was signed to direct the film version in 1930. He was having difficulty casting the pivotal role of the young Second Lieutenant Raleigh who irritates the seasoned Captain with his optimism and loyalty, and was thinking of sending to England for Maurice Evans when he was introduced to Manners, who successfully tested for the role.

With his clean-cut looks and perfect diction, Manners was quickly offered more roles, and starred opposite the former silent star Alice Joyce in *He Knew Women* (1930), *Alice White in Sweet Mama* (1930), and *Loretta Young in Kismet* (1930), in which he effectively played the young Caliph in love with a beggar's daughter. He was vamped by Myrna Loy in *The Truth About Youth* (1930) and in *The Right to Love* (1931) was Ruth Chatterton's secret lover.

The role of John Barker, the nominal lead in *Dracula* (1931), was offered to Manners after several actors, including Lew Ayres, had

'Most of today's fans are 14-year-old worshippers of the horror films - my only claim to movie fame'

turned it down. During script revisions, the role of Renfield, the estate agent who is vampirised, had been built up leaving Harker little more than a worried bystander, but Manners was given a higher salary than the rest of the cast and the film was an enormous success. Manners was to work with Lugosi twice more, and later commented that he found him "a pain in the ass from start to finish. He would pace around the sound-stage between scenes, velvet cape wrapped around him, posing in



Manners with Katharine Hepburn in *A Bill of Divorcement*, 1932

Corbis

front of a full-length mirror while he intoned with sepulchral emphasis, 'I am Dracula... I am Dracula'." Asked about the film's director Tod Browning, Manners said, "The only directing I saw was done by Kurt Freund, the cinematographer."

Manners gave one of his most sensitive performances as a burnt-out flying ace in William Dieterle's underrated *The Last Flight* (1931)

and was fine as the shy blind man who conveys his love for Barbara Stanwyck through a ventriloquist's dummy in Frank Capra's *The Miracle Woman* (1931), though the film was banned in the UK. George Cukor cast him as Katharine Hepburn's fiancé, rejected by her after she discovers there is insanity in her family, in *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932), and Manners was to remain part of Cukor's circle of close friends until the director's death in 1933.

He was not too effective as the ro-

mantic lead in *The Mummy* (1932), a superior horror film dominated by Karloff, but was praised for his lively performance in *The Warrior's Husband* (1933), which he followed with the role of the centurion in the musical *Roman Scandals* (1933).

In *The Black Cat* (1934), considered the finest film of the director Edgar Ulmer, Manners and Jacqueline Wells were newlyweds caught in a storm and taking shelter in the gloomy castle of Karloff and Lugosi. Though the film owes little to the Poe original, it is made with subtle expressionism and a dream-like atmosphere that is hauntingly effective. Manners played the title role in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1935), strangled by Claude Rains on Christmas Eve, and appeared with Katharine Hepburn again in *A Woman Rebels* (1936), after which he retired from acting to concentrate on writing.

He was coaxed back to the theatre 10 years later, starring in Maxwell Anderson's play *Truckline Cafe*. Directed by Elia Kazan and featuring an unknown Marlon Brando, the play ran for 13 performances on Broadway. But in December 1946 Manners scored a great personal success when he took over from Henry Daniell as Lord Windermere in *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Designed

by Cecil Beaton, the play was a hit in New York and toured for a year, after which Manners announced his permanent retirement as an actor.

David Manners had a home in Pacific Palisades, which he shared with a fellow writer, William Mercet, and ran an art gallery. Among his published books were two novels, *Convenient Season* and *Under Running Laughter*, and two philosophical works, *Look Through and The Soundless Voice*, the latter described by one critic as "a penetrating book on meditation".

In recent years, rich due to land investments, he lived alone in an ocean-view apartment in Santa Barbara. Married briefly early in his career, he was noted for maintaining a private personal life and refusing to dwell on the past, though he declared fond memories of his Hollywood friendships with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, George Arliss, Constance Bennett and others. "Tried and true friendship," he said, "that's what this old world needs plenty of."

TOM VALLANCE

Rauff de Ryther Duan Acklom (David Manners), actor; born Halifax, Nova Scotia 30 April 1902; married; died Santa Barbara, California 23 December 1998.

Ernie Perry

FOR SOME of his contemporaries in the House of Commons, the abiding memory of Ernie Perry is standing at the entrance to the aye and no lobbies at divisions and with his broad smile coming up afterwards and saying, "I counted you in and I counted you out." Perry was enormously proud of being the first undertaker ever to become a Member of Parliament.

Ernie Perry - no one dreamt of calling him Ernest - was born in London, brought up in London and was thoroughly London. He left school at 14 and went into the textile industry. In the early Thirties, he became unemployed, but for the next 30 years made his way in the insurance industry.

In 1934, aged only 26, he joined the Battersea Borough Council. For the next third of a century, he served as a councillor, becoming Mayor of Battersea in 1955-56 and later an Alderman of the Borough of Wandsworth. He was the very essence of Herbert Morrison's London local government and all that it entailed.

Perry spent formative years during the Second World War as a gunner, becoming a troop sergeant in the Indian Artillery and serving throughout the Far East. For the rest of his life, he was extremely concerned about the conditions of servicemen and developed a lasting and sensitive interest in the working conditions of Asians. This extended to a real understanding of the problem of the immigrant Asian communities which came under Battersea Council's umbrella, and he met them in his work as a Member of Parliament.

In the 1964 general election in Battersea South there was the battle of the two Ernests - Ernest Perry and the sitting Conservative Member Ernest Partridge; the labels were Labour Ernie vs Tory Ernest. Perry won in the small constituency

by 12,253 votes to 10,615. Since the majority of the Wilson government was only five, later reduced to three, this was an important achievement. It owed a great deal to Perry's own popularity and also the fact that he was seen as a good counterfoil to the intellectual member for Battersea North, Harold Wilson's President of the Board of Trade, the Wykehamist and Oxford don Douglas Jay.

Apart from his sterling work in the whips' office, where he was very popular as London Whip, Perry made a real contribution to the House of Commons as a result of his expertise in the pensions industry, particularly the Policy Holders' Protection Bill of July 1975. He pointed out that it was necessary to differentiate between companies and friendly societies which deal in life insurance or general insurance only - of which over 95 per cent in Britain were stable and solvent - and companies which take over an insurance company and inject another sphere of activity into it, i.e. trying to link insurance with property bonds.

Repeatedly he told the Commons that the home insurance agent would give a person the advice to which he was entitled and which would suit his pocket. It was this kind of good advice in his professional capacity that endeared Perry as a councillor to so many in Battersea.

Behind the home service agent was a battery of unpaid officials who vetted his business. If they thought an agent had sold an industrial life policy when he should have sold an ordinary life policy, they would advise the impending policy holder to take an ordinary life policy. Sixty companies ranging from the Prudential Insurance Company to the Co-operative Insurance Society used to sell insurance on the doorstep. Perry argued that he and his colleagues had made it an honourable and useful profession, and indeed it was.

Ernie Perry was without ambition to be a minister and his purpose in the House of Commons which he served so well was that Labour in office should be a success and create benefit for those who put them there.

TAM DALYELL

Ernest George Perry, insurance agent, undertaker and politician; born London 25 April 1908; MP (Labour) for Battersea South 1964-74, Wandsworth, Battersea South 1974-79; Assistant Government Whip 1968-70, 1974-75; Opposition Whip 1970-73; married 1950 Edna Perks Mankelov (died 1998; one son); died London 28 December 1998.



The first undertaker MP

Robert Powell-Jones

ROBERT POWELL-JONES was one of the most promising of his Oxford generation but also one of the most reckless. He was somebody whom you only had to meet once, on form, to know his exceptional capabilities. While his life was outwardly conventional - leading from a scholarship to Winchester and another (aged 16) to Wadham, where he won academic laurels; then an early, happy marriage and 20 years at the Bar - he was far too independent-minded and Romantic a character to be anything but fundamentally restless.

He was born in 1954. At Winchester, he suffered from severe depression and opted to go with his mother to Brazil. Apparently far

from robust (though in fact he boxed well), Powell-Jones threw himself into a succession of hazardous activities, working at a banana plantation near São Paulo, trekking through forests in search of rubber, and then embarking on the Amazon on a small cutter which was destroyed in a storm. This culminated in a three-day sojourn with the rescuers, Indians, hitherto unaccustomed to Europeans; it is likely that Powell-Jones was the only person present to have read *A Handful of Dust*.

After these Conradian experiences, Powell-Jones found difficulty in settling down at Oxford. He was arrested for being drunk and incapable in charge of a bicycle, when

dressed as a Chinaman. Nevertheless he obtained a First in Russian and in his later career invariably contrived to repair the ravages of the night. He had a lucid legal mind.

The son and stepson of diplomats, he was a formidable linguist, reading and speaking at least seven languages, and had a sound knowledge of pre-Christian civilisation. Some found him overly intellectual. He was not likely, for example, to take part in a discussion of fishing quotas given the option of looking at a Poussin. (Once, when he did look at a Poussin in a Bond Street gallery, he politely interrupted the gallery owner's detailed account of the painting to reinterpret its entire mythology.)

His interest in European culture, and in particular the art and architecture of Rome, Florence, Venice and Paris, was passionate; he had limited affection for London and showed a marked reluctance to cross the river. He collected pictures and also commissioned them, notably an ongoing series of portraits of his daughter, Stella, by Matthew Carr.

Though he often seemed happiest with his own company, Powell-Jones revelled in companionship, even encouraged a Dionysian streak in others, though he could at times be an exhorting and forbidding presence. Easily irritated by what he perceived as an offish element in many English men, he was strong-

ly drawn to the company of women and was capable of developing tendresses at speed. An endearing feature was his ability to communicate freely, when he chose, with absolutely anyone.

The gifts of penetrative intelligence and pure intellect which enabled him to maintain an envied status at the Bar, where he specialised in Chancery work, were marred by a tendency to erratic behaviour, often associated with drink, which became steadily more prevalent and ended by disrupting both his professional and his domestic life.

He accepted all consequent changes of status with dignity and retired last year to York to work on

a verse translation of Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*. He rediscovered the pleasures of research, establishing himself in the basement of the Brotherton Library, Leeds, where the essential Russian lexicon lived. He completed the translation of this and other Pushkin poems, also a short story, and arranged for their publication before his death from a heart attack. They will appear next year.

WILLIAM JOLI

Robert James Powell-Jones, barrister; born London 6 January 1954; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1978; married 1980 Flora Fraser (one daughter; marriage dissolved 1992); died York 17 December 1998.



Pushkin translations

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

CAREY: Peter M. On 27 December, tragically, following a road accident in Sri Lanka, aged 45. Dearest husband of Anita (nee George), loving father of William, Rhiannon, Angbarn, Catrin and David and greatly loved son, brother, son-in-law, uncle and friend. Arrangements to be announced in due course. Any correspondence can be addressed to MJGFC, Lee Bolton & Lee, 1 The Sanctuary, Westminster, London SW1P 3JT.

DEVILIN: Hugh Brendan, CBE FRCS, on 26 December 1998, husband of Ann, father of Tim, James, Peter and Brendan. Service at Middleborough, St Mary's RC Cathedral, Couby Newham, Saturday 2 January at 1pm, followed by private interment. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Butterwick Hospice, Stockton TS18 8XN.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Arnold Allen, former Chairman, UK Atomic Energy Authority, 74; Mr Gordon Banks, footballer, 61; Mr David Bedford, athlete, 49; Professor Sir Roy Calne, surgeon and immunologist, 68; Mr Geraint Davies, Controller, BBC Wales, 55; Mr Bo Diddley, singer, composer and guitarist, 70; General Sir David Fraser, former UK representative to Nato, 78; Sir Archibald Hamilton MP, 57; Sir John Houghton, former Chief Executive, the Meteorological Office, 67; Lord Howick of Glendale, a former managing director, Baring Bros, 61; Dame Rosalinde Hurley, microbiologist, 69; Mr Mark Kaplan, violinist, 45; Mr Timothy Mo, writer, 48; The Right Rev Peter Nott, Bishop of Norwich, 65; Mr David Prior MP, 44; Mrs Gwendolen Randall, Head, Framlingham College, 48; Sir Albert Robinson, former High Commissioner in the UK for Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 83; Mr Nick Skelton, show jumper, 41; Miss Tracey Ull-

man, actress and comedienne, 39; Mr David G. Wadsworth, Chief Education Officer for Bedfordshire, 54; Sir David Wilcocks, former Director, Royal College of Music, 79; Mr Clifford Williams, former associate director, the Royal Shakespeare company, 72.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Joseph Rudyard Kipling, author and poet, 1865. Deaths: Maurice Denton Welch, novelist and artist, 1948. On this day: Karol Wojtyla (later to be Pope John Paul II) became Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, 1963. Today is the Feast Day of St Anysia, St Anysius, St Egwin and St Sabinius of Spoleto.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards.

How to rescue angels from the tinsel

MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS

ANDREW WALKER

Do not expect to find angels carolling in the realms of glory. But rather look for in the space between ourselves and God

THE TROUBLE with angels is that they do not easily fit into our world-view. Although it is said that in America more people believe in angels than God, and the New Age movement has now incorporated angels into its pantheon of divine beings, for most of us angels are creatures conjured up once a year to form part of the magic of Christmas: the angel on the top of the Christmas tree, a small girl playing Gabriel in the school Christmas play, hosts of singing angels, looking like choirboys, on Christmas cards. Angels, in short, have been both commercialised and demythologised - we don't believe in them but it's nice to have them around, like mince pies, mistletoe, and Bing Crosby singing and dreaming of a White Christmas.

Christmas has now become an association of images and ideas fixed in nostalgic tableaux of Santa Claus and elves, Jesus, his mother and angels, children sharing presents and happy families. In this mix angels serve the same function as red robins and snowflakes, lights on the tree, decorations in the hall - they are all backdrop to the serious business of over-eating and drinking.

But in the Bible angels are serious business. The first thing to notice about them, however, is that they rarely appear by name - Michael, Gabriel, and the turncoat Lucifer are exceptions - and we know little about their appearance or *haute couture*. Michael and Gabriel are not depicted with wings, though the seraphim that shout "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of

hosts" around the throne of God are winged, as are the cherubim.

Occasionally we are given inklings that the cosmos is full of angelic beings doing God's will. In the book of Genesis Jacob dreams of a ladder reaching to the heavens on which angels ascend and descend. There are also of course fallen angels, doing their best to thwart God. In the Book of Revelation we hear of a war in heaven in which Michael and the angels defeat the Devil and his cohorts who are then cast out from God's presence.

Usually, however, with notable exceptions, the good angels in the Bible either appear as announcers of God's will, or as creatures who praise and worship him. What we might call the more magical activity of angels with the world (much loved by Hollywood) are more to be found in the Apocrypha (notably "Tobias and the Angel") than in the canonical scriptures.

What is interesting about the Christmas narratives of the birth of Jesus is that we read both of announcing angels and praising ones. Talking of angels generically, the great Protestant theologian Karl Barth, once claimed that angels are "ontologically weak". By that he meant that they are not so important in themselves, but significant only as messengers from God. In the gospel of Matthew, for example, Joseph is assured by an angel in a dream that it is right for him to marry Mary even though she is pregnant. Later, also in a dream, he is warned by an angel to flee with his wife and child to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod. The angels in these reports have nothing to say on their own account but are important only as heavenly postmen who deliver messages on time to the right person in the right place.

Greater angelic engagement can be found in St Luke's gospel where we read that God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary in Israel to prepare her for the divine conception. This was not just a courtesy call, but a wooing of Mary by God via an emissary who waits for Mary's consent before, as it were, he takes her answer back to God. In the Orthodox Church there is a sense that the whole of creation is hushed as it waits upon the reply of the girl who will freely choose to become the mother of God.

In the second chapter of Luke we have a remarkable passage where an angel appears in the heavens with a multitude of supporters, not to tell the world about the birth of God but to announce it privately to a small group

of Shepherds. The Kontakion of the Orthodox Church for Christmas Day depicts the invisible and visible world joining together in wonder and praise at the miraculous birth: "Angels and shepherds sing glory... since for our sake hath come as a newborn child he who hath come from all eternity is God".

In the Orthodox Church angels continue to be taken seriously outside the Christmas season. From childhood members are encouraged to talk to their guardian angel as helper and protector of their bodies and souls. To the Orthodox faithful angels are not so much messengers, or messengers, but heavenly intermediaries, like the saints, who continually pray for us and commune with God. Talking to angels is not necessary for salvation, nor is it a compulsory component of Orthodox life; it is simply a normative practice that proceeds on the belief in God's good creation and His bounty and providence for the world. Angels in other words are naturally accepted as part of the created order and are no more odd than the existence of human beings or inanimate matter.

It is when we see the heavenly host in this light that its value becomes apparent. The ridiculous giddy angelic confessions of the commercial Christmas we can do without. But assistance in traversing the space between ourselves and God is something we need now as much as ever.

Dr Andrew Walker is the Director of the Centre for Theology & Culture, King's College London, and a lay member of the Orthodox Church.

Is this justice or revenge?

Poland wants to extradite a Holocaust survivor, now living in Oxford, for the alleged murder of a wartime hero. By Adam LeBar

This is a story about Communism and patriotism: justice and retribution and the historical ghosts that for 50 years lay under the permafrost of the Soviet bloc. Now the ice has melted, these spectres have returned. For globalisation now encompasses not just economies, but past torture and murder. The British process of extradition that is now dealing with General Pinochet may soon be faced with a case from Poland. The protagonists here are two elderly Polish women: one Jewish, one Catholic.

The first is Helena Brus, formerly Wolinska, an elderly British pensioner nudging 80. She lives a quiet life, together with her husband Włodzimierz Brus, a professor of Russian and fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford. But behind Mrs Brus's comfortable retirement lies another, far more brutal past. Decades ago she had another life, in Warsaw during the 1950s - the years of Stalinist oppression - when she worked as a military prosecutor. Her critics accuse her of oiling the wheels of judicial murder. By issuing countless arrest warrants on charges of capital crimes in a totalitarian regime, they say she is as guilty as those who worked the gallows.

The Catholic is Maria Fieldorf-Czarska, daughter of a heroic general in the Polish Home Army, the main wartime resistance movement, who was hanged in February 1953. It was Helena Wolinska, she says, who began the process of pre-determined judicial execution by issuing the arrest warrant for General Fieldorf. Now, over 55 years later, Mrs Fieldorf-Czarska believes she has justice in sight. In a move that echoes the campaign to bring General Pinochet to justice, the Warsaw Military Court has ruled in favour of issuing an arrest warrant for Mrs Brus-Wolinska on charges of illegally extending General Fieldorf's detention. The next step will be for the Polish Justice Ministry to formally request her extradition.

Polish sources say that Britain has indicated it will not obstruct her extradition back to Poland on legal grounds. So the way is clear for another Pinochet-style episode: a clear-cut case of an aged former functionary of a totalitarian regime, apparently with blood on his or her hands, finally called to account for crimes of decades ago.

The Brus case is part of a Europe-wide



Maria Fieldorf-Czarska with a picture of her father, a hero of the Polish national resistance

desire for a reckoning for injustices arising from the war. The governments and corporations that profited so handsomely from the Holocaust, for example, know that denial is no longer adequate. Thus, the argument goes, the Right has admitted its sins and made recompense. Now it is the Left's turn and former Communist functionaries such as Helena Brus. The problem in this case is that the circumstances

are more ambiguous. Mrs Brus is a Holocaust survivor who barely escaped the fate of most of her family in the death camps. She argues that the attempt to extradite her is motivated not by a desire for justice, but rather vengeance and the anti-semitism that still persists in Poland. In a statement to the Polish press she said: "The decision of the Warsaw military court concerning my alleged crimes does

not contain a true sentence."

The prospect of an elderly Jewess, a lifelong anti-fascist, being forcibly returned to stand trial in the land of Auschwitz and Treblinka, where most of her family were killed, is troubling. But if elderly Nazis are still called to account for the Holocaust, why should aged Stalinists escape retribution? The early 1950s were times of terror in eastern Europe. Stalin had installed bru-

tal regimes run mainly by Communist exiles who had spent the war years in Moscow. Stalin understood the value of hatred, and using the principle of "divide and rule" he made sure that many of these officials were Jewish.

Returning to a Europe ravaged by the war and the Holocaust, they unquestioningly followed Moscow's orders. Anyone considered to be a threat to eastern Eu-

rope's new Marxist order was eliminated. Moscow particularly feared Polish Home Army officers, believing that they could form the nucleus of an underground resistance. Armed resistance against the Soviets continued until 1947.

General August Emil Fieldorf was arrested in November 1950 and put on trial in April 1952, charged with attempting to "use force with the aim of changing the character of the Polish state". Later the accusations changed to that of being a "fascist-Hitlerite criminal". His fate was that of most of his fellow officers who returned to Poland - a brief trial in a kangaroo court, followed by the gallows. At 3.30pm on February 24 1953 the hangman at Warsaw's Mokotow prison looped a rope around his neck. The site of his grave is unknown.

Maria Fieldorf-Czarska was informed of his death three days later, when she visited the General Prosecutor's office, looking for news of her father. None of those involved in his arrest, imprisonment and death could have imagined that their actions would return to haunt them, thanks to the persistence of his daughter and the collapse of an ideology that once ruled half a continent. Now 73, and living in Gdansk, Mrs Fieldorf-Czarska is a sprightly and hospitable woman. Her small flat is decorated with pictures of General Fieldorf, proud and upright in his Home Army uniform.

It was a letter she wrote in May 1996 to the Warsaw Military Prosecutor, asking for the names of those involved in her father's arrest and interrogation, that triggered the legal process for extradition of Helena Brus. "I did this so that justice can be done and that the people who brought my father to his death should be held responsible. Helena Wolinska brought this case on fabricated evidence and my father was unlawfully arrested. She issued the arrest warrant as a military prosecutor and then gave the case to the general prosecutor."

The reply came October 1997, that the Warsaw Military Prosecutor had begun to investigate General Fieldorf's arrest. Most of the others involved are now dead, but Wolinska was "traced to Oxford".

"She should confess that she is guilty and that what she did was unlawful. Whether or not she should go to prison is a decision for the courts. But if she confesses and asks for forgiveness, we should forgive her."

Many happy returns for unwanted presents

Standing in a queue at Marks & Spencer to swap sweaters for socks is as traditional a Christmas pastime as carol-singing. By John Flynn

To the careless observer they look like another bunch of bargain-hunters enjoying a day at the sales. Only their slightly crumpled green plastic bags bulging with presents hint at a different purpose. Those do not look like new bags containing fresh purchases. Then you begin to wonder why they're all walking into rather than out of Marks and Spencer early in the morning.

Finally, you realise that you have chanced upon a special breed of shopper. Those for whom the period just after Christmas is a season of many happy returns. Inside those bags are the patterned sweaters,

babydoll negligees and skimpy knickers which seemed so appropriate to the giver, yet appalled loved ones on Christmas morning.

M&S has a famously liberal policy of accepting returns. So liberal indeed that many of those who feel a cash gift is insulting, will have popped in just before Christmas, grabbed a few pairs of loud, diamond socks, confident that the money may be discreetly reclaimed at a later date. There is just that little problem of the long queue at the vast M&S refund section. Thank God there is a shop assistant dispensing boiled sweets to keep up good hu-

moured. "Any chance of a gin?" I ask. Cindy Colfer is here in line at the Oxford Street store, victim of an ill-chosen Christmas present. "He got me a size 8," complains Mrs Colfer, 46, from South-east London. So what's the problem? "I'm a 12," she replies through clenched teeth. Well-intentioned, seasonal battery? But Mrs Colfer is unimpressed: "He just picked it off the rack without looking and thought that would do."

Poor Mr Colfer. He had been trying. He doesn't usually venture out alone to buy clothes for his wife. "He gives us the money and tells us to get something for Mum," pipes up his daughter, Susan. "But he forgot Mum's birthday this year, so he felt he had to go out on his own and make amends."

For his double error, Mr Colfer did get off more lightly than others. "She says they are too long in the leg," sighs Paul, 37, an accountant from south London. He shows me the black satin trousers he bought for his girlfriend. "I got the size right, 14. But I've been told off for not knowing she's a 30 leg. I thought 31½ would be OK. They looked fine to me. For a bloke it's all right if trousers go over their shoes. But I'm told women like to show their feet."

Paul has left his girlfriend at home in bed on the bank holiday to arrive as soon as M&S opened. Obviously chastised, he has promised to be back in time to bring her coffee in bed. No, he will not give his full name. "It's bad enough doing this without everyone knowing about it."

Maura, 30, and her husband, Chris, 30, are still arguing about the gold satin underwear he gave her. "I was disappointed," says Chris. "She had told me that those were the ones she wanted and then she changed her mind." Maura mutters that she said no such thing. This underwear problem keeps

cropping up. Melissa Braiden, 32, from Eastcote in north-west London, is completing the annual ritual of returning a set of hira and knickers from her husband Sean. "I like what he chose," she says. "It's just that he always buys me underwear. I've still haven't used last year's lot."

But I do not find a single man returning a lover's present. There is the occasional wife bringing back a shirt that is too large. "He just gave me a look of resignation and said it was too big," confesses Linda Judd. Disgruntled women far outnumber the men. Perhaps it is because women are such good present

givers, such great assessors of size. Or maybe we wisely keep quiet. For some the return trip is just the inevitable and amusing result of poor communications. "Every year my husband's sister gives him extra large vests which don't fit him and she gives me black tights which I don't like," declares Maud Jones, 69.

Why don't they explain, I wonder. "Oh we wouldn't want to offend her." Tanya Nouril, 29, is clutching a thong from her mother. Husband, Michael, 28, is, as usual, returning his ma-in-laws traditional gift of socks. "These days, mum even wraps up the receipt," she says.

CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

No. 6963 of 1998
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
IN THE MATTER OF FOREIGN AND COLONIAL INVESTMENT TRUST PLC.
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 3 December 1998 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the share capital of the above-named company from £275,000,000 to £1,000,000. Ordinary Shares of £1 each and 1,000,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each to £275,000,000 divided into 1,000,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each and the cancellation of 1,000,000 Cumulative Preference Shares of £1 each.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said petition is directed to be heard before the Companies Court Registrar at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2, on 13 January 1999. ANY CREDITOR or shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for confirmation of the said reduction should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

No. 6964 of 1998
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
IN THE MATTER OF OLD MUTUAL SOUTH AFRICA TRUST PLC
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 3 December 1998 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the share capital of the above-named company from £22,000,000 to £2,000,000. Ordinary Shares of £1 each and 2,000,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each to £22,000,000 divided into 2,000,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each and the cancellation of 2,000,000 Cumulative Preference Shares of £1 each.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said petition is directed to be heard before the Companies Court Registrar at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2, on 13 January 1999. ANY CREDITOR or shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for confirmation of the said reduction should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

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23: DIRECTORY ENQUIRIES BY HESTER LACEY

ANY DIRECTORY enquiries staff reading this, pay attention and listen up. The following numbers are all London ones: the Palace of Westminster (as in Westminster where Parliament is); Battersea Dogs' Home (an actually quite high-profile dogs home in Battersea); Buckingham Palace (where the Queen lives). I repeat: all these national landmarks are situated in the capital. So why do you always ask "Which town?" as though there might be another Palace of Westminster in, say, Grimsby or Penzance?

If this were the worst misdemeanour that Directory Enquiries ever committed I wouldn't even bother to mention it: as it is, it is the least offensive in a list of crimes infinitely maddening to those of us who often need a number in a hurry. I have lost count of how many completely random numbers I have been given by some chirpy little creature with only a first name. A recent example: the University of Nottingham is simply not the same as some teeny little management training centre which happens to be based in the same town.

Near misses are even more aggravating than the totally off-the-wall. Call me a grumpy, reactionary old fusspot if you will but the number for an organisation



'Please hold the line, caller, and I'll find you a completely random number'

that sounds a bit like the one I requested is in fact not the same as getting the number I actually need. And why does Mark or Lynne or Sarah or David or whoever is Misinformers of the Moment keep giving out that nonsense about needing a specific town to do a search? For anyone fobbed off in their efforts to find a number by this blatant flim, stand no nonsense: if you firmly request a national search it will be done.

It is exasperating to get a charming "Sorry to keep you waiting" from your Enquiries Person because it means they are about to activate that most insulting

of recorded messages: "Sarreh. The number you require is not available. Sarreh. Sarreh indeed. Ha. Not as sarreh as you'd be if you were here in the room with me, trying to convince me that Asda's head office/the NSPCC/the British Library doesn't have a telephone.

The worst of all this is that you cannot win. Driven beyond endurance when Directories failed to come up with the number for my favourite local restaurant, I looked it up in the phone book and called them back. "You said it didn't exist, but it's here in front of me in black and white," I said triumphantly. "I want a

refund for the call, and for this one I'm making now."

"It's not on our list," said a noticeably unapologetic Enquiries Person. "What you pay for is the search, not us finding the number."

So there you have it: possibly the only service that exists where you still have to pay even if they can't come up with the goods. Imagine the great business opportunities if we could all do the same.

"I'm afraid I can't cater for your party next week, that'll be £300."

"Sorry, we don't stock the dress you want: hand in your £49.99 at the till."

How do they get away with it?

Size isn't everything

Neither the National nor the RSC had a great 1998. In fact, nearly all this year's theatrical highlights came from more unexpected venues. David Benedict pulls out some plums, while Dominic Cavendish clears a path through the fringe



Clockwise from above: Kevin Spacey in 'The Iceman Cometh'; David Bradley in 'Phèdre'; Una Stubbs in 'Twelfth Night', and Phyllis Nagy, writer of 'Never Land'



You don't have to be Mystic Meg to predict that Kevin Spacey will bag the Olivier award for his completely magnetic performance as Hickey in *The Iceman Cometh*. Of course, he was too to a winner from the off. Hickey gets the biggest huld-up in world drama – for an entire hour the rest of the cast sit around yakking about what a great guy he is and how they can't wait for him to arrive.

But Spacey did far more than cruise in on star status. He rode the wave of anticipation like a champion surfer and for the next three hours, with a host of meticulous performances surrounding him, the audience was glued.

Hayley Carmichael confirmed her promise from successive productions with her *Told By An Idiot* company giving a shimmering jewel of a performance as the yearning upper-class daughter in *Mr*

Puntilla and His Man Matti and almost stealing the show from beneath the noses of Sean Foley and Hamish McColl – aka *The Right Size*.

Indeed, some of the year's best acting came in overlooked roles. Jessica Turner brought unlooked for depths and delicious comic flair to *What You Get and What You Expect* at the Lyric Hammersmith: very sharp and very funny.

Quite rightly, everyone applauded the Almeida's bravery in taking *End*, but most people were so busy being awed by Jonathan Kent's beautiful productions and their starry leading players that few recognised the excellence of David Bradley. His riveting performance as Theramene in *Phèdre* was a masterpiece in relaxed understatement. He barely raised his voice; he just stood his ground and let the richly wrought images of Ted Hughes's translation spring to terrifying life.

There was acting of similar depth

in the play of the year, *Never Land* at the Royal Court. Phyllis Nagy's devastatingly compassionate portrait of a French family hurtling towards disaster made huge demands of its actors who progressed from farcical high comedy to a heart-breaking conclusion as the family made peace with itself. Michelle Fairley shone with self-possession. Anthony Calf brought rare humility to his role, and almost a year after seeing it, the tragic grandeur of Sheila Gish still burns bright. Watching her battling between the consoling fictions of self-delusion and a true understanding of love in the passionate final act was simply overwhelming. Steven Pimlott's production – returning next year – was also graced by an extraordinarily effective (and almost completely unnoticed) design by Mark Thompson which echoed the atmospheres and moods of Nagy's text.

There was equally bold writing in the widely misinterpreted *The Play*

About the Baby. More than any other play this year, this suffered from "reviewers' baggage" whereby preconceptions coloured the responses to the piece. Several commentators clearly expected Edward Albee to serve up a play in the same style as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and then reprimanded him for not doing so. Either that, or they criticised the subject matter – the moral responsibilities behind having children – and not the play itself. Pardon me, that's not criticism, it's censorship. Howard Davies's scrupulous production featured beautifully calibrated performances all round with a frankly hilarious Frances de la Tour matching blissful comic timing with truthful resolve to a remarkable degree.

The surprise of the year also came courtesy of the *Never Land* team. Pimlott and Thompson, who spun straw into gold with *Dr Dolittle*. With its drab score and bald hook, no one would be foolish

enough to claim that this was the musical of the year, but even cynics were stunned by its beguiling warmth and larkiness, the direct result of Pimlott and Thompson's invention and execution.

The other outstanding collaboration was between director James Macdonald and designer Jeremy Herbert on Sarah Kane's now notorious *Cleansed*. Their pristine realisation of Kane's disturbing images was an unequivocal and necessary testament to the power of live theatre. Furthermore, although it proved to be box-office poison, *Cleansed* was a timely example of a theatre staging the unique vision of its playwrights in the teeth of commercial pressure. Thanks to its unheralded Young People's Theatre, the Court also wound up with the debut of the year in Christopher Shinn's astonishingly tender and elliptical state-of-the-nation play *Four*. Shinn, 33, isn't merely promising; he's the real thing.

Cheeky Jowl went out on a high with a stunning *Much Ado About Nothing*, the only time I have ever seen all the play's elements fused into a glorious whole. Along the way, director Declan Donnellan made a star out of Matthew McFadyen whose hilarious and touching performance was only matched by his Charles Surface in Donnellan's superb *The School for Scandal*, the finest RSC show in a frighteningly long time. Then, just as the rest of the Shakespearean year looked like a washout, Michael Grandage directed *Twelfth Night* at Sheffield Crucible. Brimming with unforced humour, this carefully cast, fleet, fresh and superbly spoken production was done on four weeks rehearsal putting to shame the disaster which was Sean Mathias's *Antony and Cleopatra*, which had twice Grandage's rehearsal period and budget. The National almost made up for that with Trevor Nunn and Susan Stroman's veritable ex-

humation of *Oklahoma!* Anthony Ward's eye-widening design played no small part in its success. Yet surprisingly there was competition for the coveted award for Best Covered Wagons on the London Stage from the ludicrously enjoyable *Yee-Haw!!*, 1998's only "camp, cross-dressing cowboy musical", which had a sell-out run at the Rosemary Branch. "Sing and dance! For no particular reason", whooped the chorus. Yesiree. They share my Best Musical and Funniest Night of the Year awards with the frankly insane film noir pastiche *The Betrayal* of Nora Blake at the tiny Jermy Street Theatre. The opening number – courtesy of the movie *Laura* – was entitled "Amnesia", but, to coin a phrase, I remember it well.

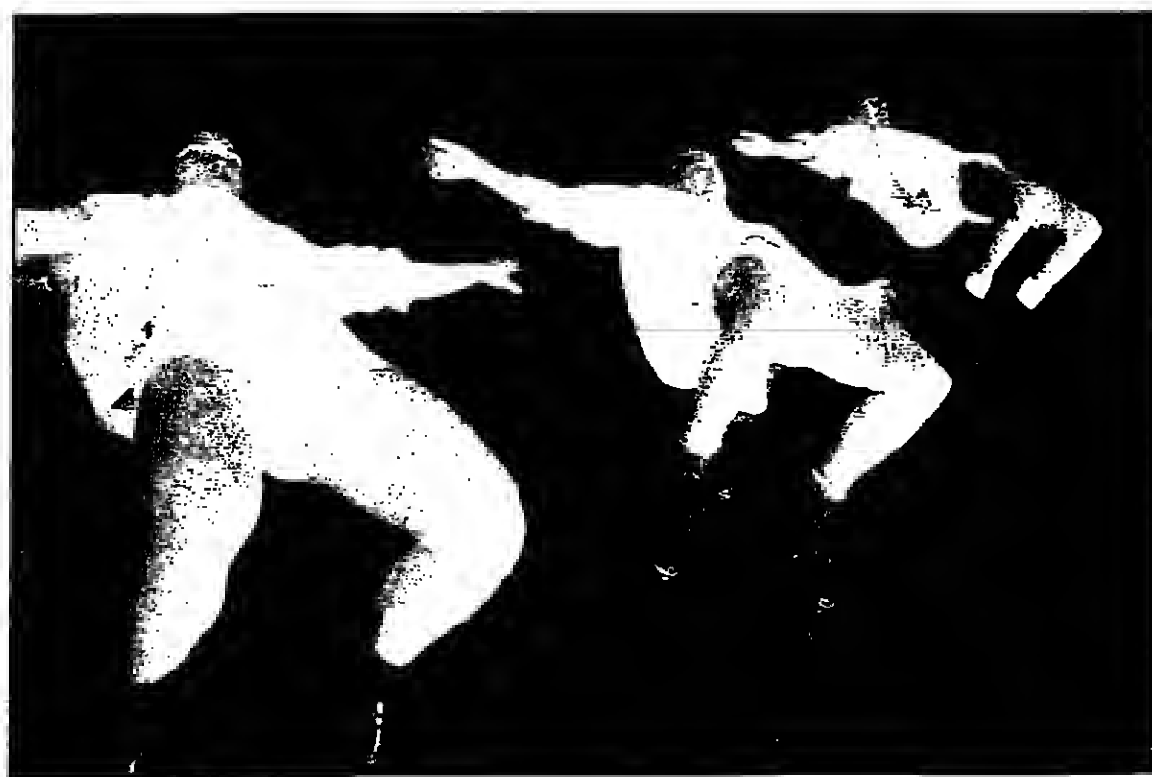
There is, however, a worrying theme to this. Theatre is alive, but rarely in the expected places. Almost none of these highlights happened within the large-scale subsidised companies. Time to take stock.

Go on, live dangerously...

INEVITABLY, LOOKING back, there are regrets. Shows I wish I'd seen. Shows I would gladly have triggered a security alert to extricate myself from (oh, for a mobile phone during *Eyam*, the Bridewell musical set during the Plague). There were more misses than hits – even though the selection of productions covered was weighted in favour of the most promising. Hardly surprising, you might think if the term "fringe theatre" signifies anything, it is a peripheral space where artists have the prerogative to fail as well as the opportunity to prove themselves. Judging by what was on offer this 12-month, though, much of the failure stems from over-caution. The spirit of risk-taking and innovation is scarcely to be seen.

If you wanted memorable new plays in '98, you could look further afield than the Bush or the Royal Court, but you had to keep your eyes peeled. Katie Hims's *The Breakfast Soldiers* made a good early impression at the rejuvenated Finborough. This sprightly comedy captured, with a mischievous hint of pastiche, the daffy awkwardness of two upright and uptight sisters sharing a house in the wake of the First World War, a co-dependence poignantly soured by the passage of time. Rosalind Philips and Verity Hewlett's performances, minutely relaying the neuroses caused by unacted-upon desire, remain, for me, the year's most welcome surprises.

David Lewis's first full-length work, *Sperm Wars* – a frequently hilarious, though overly farcical, eavesdrop on the mutual recriminations of a childless couple – gave the Orange Tree's excellent new ensemble something to get their teeth into apart from solid revivals. Nick Green's *Her Alabaster Skin*, first seen at the grossly under-rated White Bear in Kennington, boasted some startlingly idiosyncratic brutality inflicted on a lone male: os-



The tirelessly physical Frantic Assembly performing 'Flesh'

Geraint Lewis

tensibly an ornate gangster turn, the piece slid into a mordant vision of a society whose key players are pathologically incapable of tolerating the existence of stand-alone individuals.

There were other slices of life that left a powerful aftertaste. Stephen Clark's *Take-Away* – presented by Mullan at the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith – was a touching portrait of a family-run Chinese take-away facing an uncertain future. Jack Shepherd's *Half Moon*, presented at the Southwark Playhouse, was a gripping fly-on-the-wall study of daddied, hickering bohemians in a Fitzrovia watering hole during the Falklands War. Both com-

bined a vibrant authenticity with an elegiac sense of eras at an end. Both reaffirmed the value of intimate theatre spaces; neither could be said to point the way forward, though.

To see moulds being broken and recast, the place to go was the BAC, that, after four years under the aegis of Tom Morris, has become something of a phenomenon. Readers may scratch their heads in wonder at the frequency with which the acronym of the Battersea Arts Centre appears but with 300 companies passing through this former town hall in 1998, the building now fully deserves its tag as "the national theatre of the fringe". By sim-

ply not charging rental, the BAC has opened the doors to a whole generation of performers and there's been a stampede of talent.

In the recent past, it has provided a launch-pad for the now universally championed *Improbable Theatre* and *The Right Size*, both of which vaulted into the mainstream with the deliciously nasty *Shockheaded Peter* and the buoyant *Mr Puntilla and His Man Matti*. This year, there was some typically astute programming, which brought established artists back into the fold, and highlighted the strengths of unknowns. The *In the Dark* season this summer – which forced the au-

diences to supply the visuals with their imagination – may have been partly borne out of a need to keep the costs of this underfunded centre down, but the likes of *Theatre de Complicite* and *Improbable* leapt at the opportunity to get involved. The season was so popular with performers and punters, it returns next year.

The even greater success of the BAC's contribution to The British Festival of Visual Theatre in October – 70 per cent of seats sold for the 100-odd performances, most of which flitted by too fast to get critical coverage – suggests that once a venue has secured the public's trust, a micro-climate of innovation develops.

Two undoubted highlights were Michael Wynne's *Sell Out*, a bruisingly accurate description of the fickle loyalties of twentysomethings performed by the tirelessly physical Frantic Assembly, and *Tunnel Vision*, a tragicomic puppet-show from Faulty Optic that portrays the whole world as a cross between a concentration camp and a theme park with hi-tech and lo-tech wizardry.

By this time next year, you'll probably be sick of hearing about these two companies. The risky ventures of 1998 become the safe bets of 1999, while the plodding revivals and wannabe West End musicals are simply forgotten. A critic can take very little credit for this process, beyond helping to point the public in the right direction. If you haven't yet done so, make it your resolution to beat a path to Battersea.

DC

'Take-Away' tours to Liverpool, Brighton and Manchester in April 1999; 'Sell Out' is touring the UK to April (booking: 01792 774888); 'Sperm Wars' is at the Orange Tree, Richmond (0181-940 3633), 1-13 February; 'Tunnel Vision', ICA, London (0171-930 3647), 11-13 January



Less is more: Get a fashion make-under for the New Year

PAGE 8

Betrayal

by Harold Pinter

"The performances are first rate... an enthralling production of an indisputably great play!"
Daily Telegraph

"This is Pinter played not only with a bruising sense of pain, but with a rare feeling for a paradise lost."
Guardian

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A make-over? That's so over

It's a chic, subtle way to get a new look without spending too much at the beauty counter. Meet the make-under. By **Melanie Rickey**



The 50s
Janet Jones, 53, surveyor for Thames Water (before, above), after, wearing black shirt £105, by Ghost, from Diverse, 294 Upper Street London N1 (0171-359 8877. Ghost enquiries 0181-960 3121). Compact base 03, £15; loose powder C7, £12.50; brow-colour beige, £8; purple eyeshadow 530 pearl, £8; white brow-highlighter 100, £8; brown/black mascara, £10; nude 850 matt lip colour, £10; nude lip liner, £8



The 30s
Diana Pepper, 36, bride-to-be (before, above), after, wearing black long-sleeved top, £155, by Ghost, from Diverse, as before. Compact base 3, £14.50; loose powder 2, £12.50; Blonde brow-colour, £8; white brow-highlighter 100, £8; purple 500 matt eyeshadow as upper-lid liner, £8; blue 630 matt eyeliner, £7; brown/black mascara, £10; Beige 80 pearl cheek colour, £10; nude 850 matt lip colour, £10



The 20s
Helen Georgiou, 23 (before, above, after, wearing black polo-neck jumper, £30, from Gap, branches nationwide, enquiries 0800 427 789. Base 05, £14.50; beige 800 matt eyeshadow, £8; yellow 230 pearl eyecolour, £8; Brown 940m wet eyeliner across upper lashes, £8; black/brown mascara, £10; purple 530s lipstick, £10; gold 20 lipgloss, £8.50; beige 800 matt cheeks, £10



The teens
Laura Garrett, model, 16 (before, above), after, wearing white shirt, £28, Gap, Concealer duo 1&2, £8; beige 80 matt eyeshadow, £8; brown mascara, £10; neutral 110 lipgloss, £8.50. All make-up by Ruby & Millie at selected Boots. Photographer: Trish Morrissey/Make-up: Ruby Hammer assisted by Christine Gaunt/Nails: Sue Filouri, The Untouchables/Hair: Craig Mason, Toni & Guy/ Fashion Assistant: Amy Jones



Everyone has witnessed the power of the make-over. If not in a magazine or newspaper, then most definitely on just-axed morning television show *Style Challenge*. This, and other daytime shows, have popularised the notion that most people need a team of experts to "make-over" their dull looks into those worthy of a second glance.

This idea may work well on TV, but for real life, forget it. In fact for 1999, as we say goodbye to *Style Challenge*, it is time to proclaim the make-over as, well, over. The "make-under" is here.

The first known use of the term "make-under" came from an off-beat make-up column in New York-based fashion magazine *Jane*, which launched in 1997. Each month a *Jane* journalist takes to the streets to find a woman who literally piles it on - like Dorian Green in *Birds of a Feather*, but worse. Their examples are hilarious and have become cult reading: imagine a bad perm with growing-out highlights combined with goth/cheerleader makeup. Lip-liner is brown, lipstick is frosted pink. Blusher

looks like a bruise, eyebrows are drawn in, eyeshadow has been applied with a trowel. What's really scary is that this woman thinks she looks great.

The make-under process involves scrapping the make-up off, and then reapplying it in a similar, but more chic, way. The hair is also cut to enhance the facial features. The results are always fabulous, but subtle, and suitable for real life.

Fast forward to October. The new Selfridges beauty room opens to the public, and one of its glossy parlours is inhabited by Ruby & Millie, the new range developed by Ruby Hammer (top make-up artist) and Millie Kendall (make-up addict).

Guess what Ruby & Millie were promoting? Yep, the concept for the make-under had arrived in the UK.

Ruby Hammer had been nurturing the make-under idea for two years. "We had the idea when we began to develop our range in 1996," she says. "We were at one of those seminars which predicts future trends, when the man giving a talk mentioned make-under. Me and Millie just looked at each other and thought 'spooky'."

When their Boots-backed range finally launched in June this year, with its perspex and silver user-friendly packaging (designed by jeweller Sheila Teague from duo Wright & Teague), affordable prices (nothing is more than £15) and approachable colours, Ruby & Millie were firm believers in the make-under.

But before we begin our own make-under, Ruby reminds us that "a make-under is not a no make-up look".

"It is about refining and improving, or toning down. It is about using less to achieve more. I'm not asking people to buy ten products when two will do. I am a consumer as well as a businesswoman."

All of the women who agreed to take part were looking to change their day-to-day look. And all with the exception of Laura Garrett who, at 16, doesn't even need make-up, wanted to become sleeker, chic-er version of their former selves. At our request, they all arrived wearing their usual everyday make-up.

Ruby started by discussing the way make-up is applied. Laura Garrett had her complexion evened out with a few dabs of

concealer, but no foundation was used. "She's got lovely skin. Why use it if it's not needed?" said Hammer. Her lips were enhanced with gloss, and her eyes were lightly lined. That was it.

Diana Pepper was keen to get some advice for her forthcoming wedding day in February. "At my age, it's time to re-evaluate my regime," she said. Diana's usual make-up is black mascara - "I never use eyeliner because my eyes are too deep-set" - brownish lipstick, Clarins liquid foundation and loose powder on the T-zone.

Ruby immediately advised her to use a green cream to tone down her flushed cheeks. "Just lightly dab it," she said, "if you can see it on the skin, you've used too much. Once that's done, you can do pretty much anything, and it's time you wore some eyeliner."

"She has incredible aquamarine eyes," continued Ruby as she set to work on Diana with navy eyeliner across the upper lids, and a lighter blue on the lower lid. A highlighter stick was also used to bring out the contour of the brow, and the eyebrows themselves were shaded. Mascara was

applied last. Lips and cheeks were left subtle, leaving the eyes transformed, and the hair was softened into a neater shape.

Diana was over the moon. "I absolutely love it. I would never have thought my eyes could look this good. Ruby was so quick, and a bit bossy, but that's good. All I need to buy now is some eyeliner, shadow and highlighter, and I can probably do it myself for the wedding."

Helen Georgiou needed a make-up lesson and a few slight changes. "I've never even thought about how to apply make-up before," she said. "I just put it on." Ruby removed her everyday slick of Body Shop foundation, Oil of Ulay mascara, brown eyeshadow and orangey lipstick from Estee Lauder, and again went to work on the eyes. "She doesn't do anything with them," said Ruby. "I gave the eyes a flash of gold across the lids, some light shadow, and a wet eyeliner to brush across upper and lower lids. She's got a lovely warm skin tone because she's half Greek, and she hides it under foundation. Why? I warned it up with a light blush, and offset it with a purple-brown lipstick and gold lipgloss."

It wasn't a mind-boggling transformation, but Helen was nonetheless very pleased, and surprised. "I can't believe how little make-up it took. I feel like I'm hardly wearing any, yet I look totally different."

Janet Jones admitted that she slaps her make-up on at 5.30am every morning. "I have to be at work at 7am, and I try to retain my femininity. I last changed my make-up nine years ago. Since then, I've lost weight in my face, and developed rosier cheeks." Ruby applied green cream to even out the skin tone, but not too much - "her natural flush means we don't need blusher" - and softened the skin tone with a warm base, loose powder, and used the miracle highlighting stick on the upper cheeks and brow. Highlighting stick is the best new make-up product around, she says.

She finished off by working around the eyes, to bring out their green colour, and then lined them softly. "My main objective with Janet was to work with her skin tone, and bring out her eyes. Everything is subtle. That is what a make-under is about. Everyone here could go out on the street, and look good but not overdone."

1999: It's fashion, Jim, and almost as we predicted it

We are about to reach the imagined era, and fashions, of Buck Rogers, Barbarella and Flash Gordon. Trendsetters born in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s recall for Melanie Rickey their childhood visions. And they weren't too wide of the mark

Max Clifford, publicist

"As a youngster in the 1950's I read a comic called *The Eagle* (with) Dan Dare who wore what now looks like a tracksuit. He was a spaceman, zooming around the universe saving people, and I thought his costume looked comfortable and easy. I was nine or ten then and all I wanted to do was play football. As a kid I wanted to get things on as quickly as possible and get out into the streets. Now I live in tracksuits when I'm not in the office, as I play a lot of sport."

Reflected trends: sportswear as everyday attire
Labels: Nike, Adidas

Elspeth Gibson, fashion designer

"I thought that by 1999 everyone would look the same and be dressed in all-in-one metallic outfits - very futuristic, very glamorous, and very hi-tech. What comes to mind is the scene in

Barbarella when Jane Fonda floats

around in a silver/white space suit." Reflected trends: 1970s glam rock revival (in silver); cyber punk, androgyny, hi-tech fabrics
Labels: Ad Hoc, Versace, Issey Miyake, Buffalo, Prada Sport

Andrew Groves, fashion designer

"I grew up with images of white catsuits in my head - very clinical, like something out of 2001, and very hi-tech with people living on pills. I think *Bladerunner* got it right with... the future having no connection to the past. I imagined we'd all be a Space Family Robinson, but it's never going to happen. Similarly I always thought that, by 1999, men and women would all look the same, very unisex and blonde, for some reason. It's never going to be like that either. Clothes are an identity, not a uniform."

Reflected trends: androgyny,

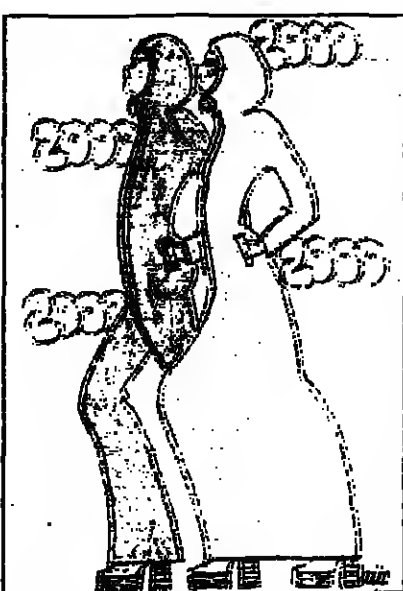
sportswear, hi-tech fabrics, minimalism

Labels: Courreges, Prada Sport, Jil Sander

Iain R Webb, fashion director Elle

"In my second year at the John Gault Grammar School in Wiltshire (circa 1970, when I was 12) there was a competition to design a school uniform for the year 2000. I designed a unisex uniform (right): all-in-one hooded zip-front outfits worn with matching platform boots. At the time I worshipped The Angels on Gerry Anderson's *Captain Scarlet*, and was a big fan of *Space 1999*. Our blazers were bottle green, so I chose two different shades of green (lime for the girls and pea for the boys). Looking back it's remarkable how skinny and sexless the drawings are - the boy has no obvious genitalia - but then I guess I was young and sex was still a mystery to me."

Reflected trends: androgyny, hi-tech



Iain R Webb's 1970 vision of style

fabrics, luxury sportswear, utility, minimalism

Labels: Prada Sport, Jil Sander, Louis Vuitton, Dirk Bikkembergs, YMC, Helmut Lang

Harriet Quick, editor, Frank

"I was convinced as a kid that 1999, if the bomb had not dropped, would see me turn 31, married with at least two children (wrong and wrong again), living in an igloo-shaped abode with Jimmy Saville do-everything chairs, eating freeze-dried food, travelling by traveller and wearing pale-coloured clothes with rainbow stripes and zips. The latter, inspired by the clones in *Logan's Run*, has not transpired - though I figure the new Prada Sport collection comes pretty close."

Reflected trends: sportswear as everyday attire, utility, hippy, hi-tech
Labels: Prada Sport, Helmut Lang, Jil Sander

Nicolas Ghesquiere, head designer, Balenciaga

"From about age seven or eight I have been very attached to science fiction movies. Films such as *Star Wars*, *Barbarella*, *Bladerunner* and *Alien* - and the outfits that go with them - have represented for me what I have imagined for future fashion. Important fashion elements are protection from a hostile apocalyptic world, and items inspired by the children's toy, Playmobil, in which the 'clothing' is made of plastic and is removable. I also loved Princess Leia's hair in *Star Wars*. The mix between romance, innocence, and violence is intriguing. My favourite idea is in *Barbarella*, when (you can) wear anything just by clicking the fingers. Maybe one day!"

Reflected trends: none so far
Labels: Balenciaga

RESEARCH: SUSANNAH CONWAY

The great escape

A change in the law means less of your bequest need end up with the tax man.
By John Whiting

The landed gentry have, over the past few decades, faded into genteel - and sometimes poverty-stricken - obscurity. But shire tofts were given cause to celebrate earlier this month, after the Inland Revenue suffered a rare defeat in the House of Lords, in a case which could rescue hundreds of large estates from crippling inheritance tax duties.

The Lords found in favour of taxpayers in an argument over a disputed inheritance tax bill that could have cost the estate of Lady Ingram, a wealthy landowner, hundreds of thousands of pounds. The implications of the Ingram judgement are clearly important - scores of similarly-affected landowners paid into a fighting fund to help pay for the legal battle waged by her descendants and their lawyers.

While few of us have the sort of estate that Lady Ingram or her supporters had, the decision in her favour has shown a way of solving a common problem. Lady Ingram's concern was that she wanted to give her house to her family. That, as is well known, is the basic way of avoiding inheritance tax (IHT) - pass on your assets, survive for seven years, then there is no tax to pay. But this was her home so what was she going to do if she gave it to her children? And given that this was no suburban semi but a large country house, Hurst Lodge, set in 61 acres of countryside, one can understand her wish to live out her days there.

How about giving away the house but keeping the right to live there? Not good enough: the IHT rules have a nasty provision called GROBs - Gifts with Reservation of Benefit. Giving something away but keeping part of it means that the tax will operate as if you hadn't given the asset away at all. So if Lady Ingram



While few of us have huge estates, the Lords' findings on inheritance tax address a common problem

North News & Pictures

gave away the house but stayed living there, she would be GROB'd unless she paid full market rent for the property - probably impractical. And few would want to give their house away without the definite right to stay on, leaving it up to their offspring to have the final say - children don't always do what you want!

The idea of splitting the asset does start a train of thought. Shares can be split into an income stream (the dividends) and a capital asset: could the same thing work with a property? This was in effect what was done with Hurst Lodge. Lady Ingram transferred the property to her solicitor who promptly granted her a 20-year lease to live in the property rent-free. The freehold was held in trust for her family.

The House of Lords has held that this route works to avoid the GROB rule. Lady Ingram had, in effect, created two assets where one was before, passed on one of those assets, and gained an IHT advantage.

Sadly Lady Ingram is no longer with us to celebrate her triumph. She died in 1987. But she has left a legacy of value to others beyond her family. Anyone in a similar position to her - probably a widow, living in a large house that is the major part of their

assets, with no spouse to leave their wealth to - may be able to solve an IHT problem. (Anything left to the spouse is IHT-free.) The door has opened to show a way of passing on the property and reducing the IHT burden. But this is not something to do without professional advice. Inevitably, anything to do with property needs proper legal documentation - so, as the TV shows put it, please don't try this one by yourself at home.

However, if home does represent a large potential IHT burden - perhaps the majority of a £400,000-plus estate, which would imply IHT of at least £70,000 - it might well be worth

exploring the route and incurring some professional fees.

There will be risks. Getting the paperwork right is crucial to minimise the dangers of the plan not working. And it must be borne in mind that this might be a door that is only briefly open - it may well be one that is slammed shut again by the Chancellor in next year's Budget, or even earlier if he sees a flurry of Lady Ingram imitators exploiting her legacy.

John Whiting is a tax partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, chartered accountants.

Power of ten

THE FIXERS:



TIM COCKERILL

A FEW years ago, Ken Ferguson had bought a high income bond paying 10 per cent per annum, with any capital return reliant on the stockmarket not falling over the term. He telephoned, not because he was unhappy with the product but because he was thinking ahead knowing that his 10 per cent income would be stopping in the not too distant future.

Ten per cent income is a bit of a magic figure and a level of income that most investors have been used to for a number of years. With interest rates falling, many clients face a bit of a shock when looking to reinvest their money.

"What I am looking for," said Ken Ferguson, "is a product that will pay me 10 per cent net income each year with little risk to the capital."

"I am sorry, but I am going to have to disappoint you," I said. "That rate of return on that type of product simply does not exist anymore."

Ken said that he had never considered how the falling bank rate would affect some investment products. "Unfortunately," I explained, "they are all interlinked to a greater or lesser degree."

"So what options are open if there is not an identical product for me to go back to?" Ken asked.

I said: "Like all investment decisions, generating income is a question of risk versus return. Take risk-free investments with building societies. They are unlikely to offer more than 6.5 per cent gross at present, and as you are a taxpayer you will be liable to income tax. Interest rates are likely to fall further, and consequently the return on the building society will also reduce."

"That doesn't sound too attractive," replied Ken. "What about Tessa?"

"Well, they are worth looking at. Although the rates will fluctuate they tend to offer more than a building society, and as it is sensible to keep money in the building society for emergencies it is worth considering putting some of that money in a Tessa. The advantage of the Tessa is that interest is paid tax free."

"If we move slightly up the risk profile, you could consider a with-profit bond, such as the Prudential or Scottish Widows, and these will pay you 5.75 per cent and 6.75 per cent net reversionary bonuses at present. But it's still not as good as you are used to."

"Don't these tie me in for a long time?" enquired Ken.

"To an extent, but you have to realise that they are designed for the longer term - and that has to be at least five years. Historically with-profit bonds have given very com-

fortable returns; not exciting but very steady and reliable."

Ken Ferguson said that the drop in income from these investments would prove a problem after being used to 10 per cent.

"If you want a higher income the only option is to go further up the risk scale. Perhaps you should consider a corporate bond fund, such as the M&G High Yield Bond which has a gross yield of 7.85 per cent or the Aberdeen Fixed Interest Fund which yields 8.5 per cent gross, both of which can go into a PEP. If you cannot PEP them then obviously you are liable to tax, which brings their returns down to that offered by with-profit bonds."

"Is there nothing that pays 10 per cent or more?" asked Ken.

"There is a class of share issued by split investment trusts which benefit from all of the income that trust generates," I began. "These are really quite high-risk geared investments, meaning that they exaggerate market movements in both an upward and downward direction."

"The new CGU Monthly High Income investment trust is producing over 10 per cent and soon to be launched the Jupiter Enhanced Income investment trust aim to pay 10.25 per cent gross. They are not the most straightforward investments, and you should limit exposure to a small part of your portfolio."

"So my choices are: accept that I'll get a lower income, or increase my risk?"

"Correct," I said. After a couple of days to think it over, Ken requested a prudent strategy, and I recommended a diversified selection of investments maximising his tax benefits through Tessa's and Corporate Bond PEPs. Like many investors, he has had to lower his expectations of the returns from income investments.

Tim Cockerill is the managing director of Whitechurch Securities, independent financial advisers (0800 374413)

Taxing time for Europe

More vital problems need to be solved. By Ian Barlow and David Evans

It is not often that tax policies of other countries form the lead story in the UK media. But a sense of proportion needs to be brought to the fore over EU tax harmonisation that has dominated the run-up to this weekend's introduction of the euro.

First of all, what does harmonisation mean? People seem to assume that equalising the corporate tax rates means companies would pay the same tax in each state. This is a gross oversimplification, as the tax bases - the underlying system of calculating the profits on which companies pay their tax - would remain very different in each country.

To date there has been minimal progress in harmonising the direct tax systems of the EU's member states. In the early Nineties, the European Commission brought forward a number of directives designed to facilitate the operation of the single market and reduce double taxation - that is where companies end up paying tax twice on the same profit. Just two of these proposed directives were approved - the parent/subsidiary directive that reduces taxation on dividends, and the mergers directive which facilitates cross-border reorganisations, disposals and acquisitions. Other proposals for directives were dropped as it was not possible to reach agreement between all the member states.

More recently, as member states focus on protecting their tax revenues, the Commission has found a more receptive audience to its exhortations to co-ordinate tax policy. France and Germany, in particular, have been concerned to prevent companies establishing themselves in tax havens and reducing the tax payable at home. EU Tax Commissioner Mario Monti - who has taken a much more cautious approach to the whole subject than the German and French governments - has said: "If you create a tax haven



Dawn Primarolo of the EU working party

UPPA

for a few people, you condemn the rest to a tax hell." As a result, in December 1997 EU Finance Ministers reached an agreement on a package of measures intended to combat harmful tax competition between member states.

The package consisted of these three elements:

- A code of conduct for business taxation.
- A proposal for a directive on interest and royalties.
- A proposal for a directive on the taxation of interest income from savings - the savings directive.

The first, the code of conduct is perhaps the most interesting element of the package: it is designed to prevent "harmful tax competition" within the EU by encouraging member states to withdraw special tax regimes. These aim to attract businesses that are internationally mobile without affecting the general rate of business tax in the country. For example, in a country with a headline rate of tax of 40 per cent, a regime that offered a 10 per cent rate of tax

to financing activities might be harmful in this context, especially if it applied only to foreign companies or foreign income.

The working party established under the code of conduct - chaired by the UK's own Dawn Primarolo (Financial Secretary at the Treasury, and MP for Bristol South) - has now identified 82 low-tax arrangements for businesses within the EU which might be harmful. Ten of these are reported to be UK provisions, including special measures for the film industry, for ship operators, and for the tax breaks provided by enterprise zones - but this has yet to be confirmed.

The EU savings directive has also been much in the headlines. This proposes that each member state introduce either a minimum 20 per cent withholding tax on payments of interest to individuals in other member states, or a requirement to report such payments to the tax authorities in the member state of the recipient. The UK Government would not favour introducing a with-

holding requirement in domestic legislation, but would probably be happy with a reporting requirement, provided an exemption was introduced for Eurobond interest. Without an exemption, it is feared, there would be very harmful effects on the London Eurobond market, and the Government has stated that, unless adequate protection is introduced, it will veto the proposal. There is no reason to doubt their word.

The code of conduct for business taxation does not go far enough for some. With EMU levelling the playing field in 11 member states, tax will be one of the few remaining areas in which countries can still compete: there is no prohibition in the code of conduct on lowering the national rate of business tax - Ireland has said it will progressively lower its national rate to 12.5 per cent by 2003.

While some view competition as a bad thing, others believe it encourages member states to have disciplined public finances, and provides a last remaining lever in running the economy within the Eurozone. However, given the political tensions, we are bound to see more headlines in the tabloids before long.

But in many ways, the current debate on tax harmonisation misses the point for business - the real concern is how barriers to doing business can be overcome and Europe can be a true single market? It is, for example, the inability to offset losses in one country against the profits in another, and the requirement to determine taxable profits according to the different tax bases in 15 member states that increase tax costs in the single market. These are the issues that the Commission must focus on - the current debate on tax rates will be of little or no help to business.

Ian Barlow is UK head of tax and David Evans is director of international tax at KPMG.

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WEDNESDAY RADIO

RADIO 1

7.00 Chris Moyles. 10.00 Scott Mills. 1.00 Kevin Greening. 4.00 Dave Pearce. 8.00 Steve Lamacq. The Evening Session. 10.00 John Peel. 12.00 Gilles Peterson. 2.00 Emma B. 4.00-7.00 Clive Warren.

RADIO 2

(88-90.2MHz FM) 6.00 Mo Duffa. 8.05 Sarah Kennedy. 10.00 Richard Allinson. 12.00 Jimmy Young. 2.00 Alex Lester. 5.05 Johnnie Walker. 7.00 Malo's Maverick Christmas. 8.00 Mike Harding Review of the Year. 9.00 The Andy Peebles Soul Show. 10.00 Route 66 Revisited. 10.30 Bob Harris. 12.00 Katrina Leskanich. 3.00 - 4.00 Nicky Home.

RADIO 3

(90.2-92.4MHz FM) 6.00 On Air. 9.00 Masterworks. 10.30 Artist of the Week. 11.00 Sound Stories. 12.00 Composer of the Week: Saint-Saens. 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. 2.00 The BBC Orchestras. 3.50 The Harmonic Series. 4.00 Choral Evensong. 5.00 A Medieval Christmas. 5.30 Music Rooms. 6.00 Discovering Music with Leonard Slatkin. 6.55 Performance on 3. 7.45 The Coo and the Tser. An investigation into the satirical intent behind Belsky's adaptation of Pushkin's tale and Rimsky-Korsakov's further alterations. 8.40 The Golden Cockerel, Acts 2 and 3. 9.40 Postscript. Kevin Jackson unravels the stories behind classic works of European literature. 3: 'The Poems of Friedrich Holderlin'. In September 1806, Friedrich Holderlin was forcibly removed to a clinic for the insane. Discharged after eight months, he was given only three years to live, though he survived a further 36 living in a tower being cared for by a carpenter. Before his mental breakdown, he had written a series of elegies and hymns that make him one of the finest poets of the romantic age. Kevin Jackson explores this highly

PICK OF THE DAY

THE RECIPE for a Manhattan cocktail seems to be three parts greed, two parts history and add a dash of grievance. Manhattan Story (11am R4) is the tale of Robert Edwards, a Welsh naval officer granted Manhattan Island (right) by the Crown in 1770. In 1778 he leased the land for 99 years to the wardens of Trinity Church; but when the lease was up,

the Church kept a firm hold. Since 1921, the descendants of Edwards have been fighting to prove that the land is theirs, and if they win, they stand to gain a cool \$680 billion. For those of us on smaller budgets, Them and Us (5pm R4) asks whether the power of the supermarkets is a good or a bad thing. ROBERT HANKS



distinctive vision and the way this iconic figure inspired samizdat writers in East Germany. 10.00 Fairs. Piano Quartet No 1 in C minor, Op 15. James Clark and Ruth Crouch (violin), Catherine Marwood (viola), Ursula Smith (cello), Graeme McNaught (piano). 10.35 The Harmonic Series. 6: Adrian Jack keeps going in parallel motion. 10.45 Book, Music and Lyrics. Six programmes in which Robert Cushman presents a personal view of musicals, with songs from original cast recordings - some familiar, some less well known. 5: 'In memoriam: Ben Bagley and Jerome Robbins'. A tribute to two musical theatre notables who died this year: Broadway's greatest director-choreographer and the creator of the Revisited record series which preserved hundreds of fine and neglected songs. 11.30 Jazz Notes. 12.00 Composer of the Week. 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night. RADIO 4 (92.4-94.6MHz FM) 6.00 Today. 9.00 NEWS; Midweek. 9.30 The Big. 9.45 Serial: Peter Pan and Wendy. 10.00 NEWS; Woman's Hour. 11.00 NEWS; Manhattan Story. See Pick of the Day. 11.30 Choice Grenfell. 12.00 NEWS; You and Yours. 1.00 The World at One. 1.30 Wildbrain. 2.00 NEWS; The Archers.

2.45 Afternoon Play: Open Secrets. 3.00 NEWS; Gardeners' Question Time Christmas Special. 3.30 The Small Act. (R) 3.45 It Didn't Mean a Thing. 4.00 NEWS; Case Notes. 4.30 Thinking Allowed - The Larger Map. 5.00 PM. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.30 Booked. 7.00 NEWS; The Archers. 7.45 Front Row. Francine Stock charts the mysterious art of 90s film-making - pitching the script, hooking a star, raising the cash, finding distribution. And is the concept of a British film now outmoded? 7.45 Under One Root. The second of three five-part dramatisations from the Michele Hanson stories, with Janet Maw, Edna Doré and Luisa Bradshaw-White (3/5). 8.00 NEWS; Them and Us. Diana Madill presents the first in a series of lively debates about the major issues of the day. 'Supermarkets have more power than is good for you'. Fruit grower Mark Giles and butcher Graham Hurley slug it out with Tony Combes from Safeways and economist Sean Rickard in front of an audience at Loominster, Worcestershire. See Pick of the Day. 8.45 Keynote. Oz Style (3/4/5/3). 2.30 News. 3.00-4.00 The World at One. 4.30-5.00 The World at One. 5.30-6.00 The World at One. 6.00-6.30 The World at One. 6.30-7.00 The World at One. 7.00-7.30 The World at One. 7.30-8.00 The World at One. 8.00-8.30 The World at One. 8.30-9.00 The World at One. 9.00-9.30 The World at One. 9.30-10.00 The World at One. 10.00-10.30 The World at One. 10.30-11.00 The World at One. 11.00-11.30 The World at One. 11.30-12.00 The World at One. 12.00-12.30 The World at One. 12.30-1.00 The World at One. 1.00-1.30 The World at One. 1.30-2.00 The World at One. 2.00-2.30 The World at One. 2.30-3.00 The World at One. 3.00-3.30 The World at One. 3.30-4.00 The World at One. 4.00-4.30 The World at One. 4.30-5.00 The World at One. 5.00-5.30 The World at One. 5.30-6.00 The World at One. 6.00-6.30 The World at One. 6.30-7.00 The World at One. 7.00-7.30 The World at One. 7.30-8.00 The World at One. 8.00-8.30 The World at One. 8.30-9.00 The World at One. 9.00-9.30 The World at One. 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The Independent 30 December 1998

VIEWERS CAN usually expect a certain level of intellectual rigor from a documentary on Channel 4 and, in that regard, *Smoochings: Secrets of the Sluts* was convincing. Until the final credits rolled (it was, I think, emerged that it was a Foxborne Television production for the Discovery Channel...),

A generation ago, someone produced Arthur C. Clarke's *Mysterious World*, and it was clear from *Stratigraphy's* predictions and esoteric pseudo-scientific claims that what we had here was a direct descendant. The hardest hint of this came from the *Stratigraphy* editor on the *Guardian* James Wallace, aligned with some going on here: "The first half of the sentences seemed to advocate a relativist New - which was prudent in light of the Italciana Horizons which had preceded it - but the second half drifted into objectification suggesting that there were, indeed, 'secrets' to discover."

over-aging section editors, consisting of wild chimes, unified symbols and swarming synthesized chorals.

The film's main advocate was a physicist by the name of Taverne Meender, a man with a simplistic, sex-obsessed analysis of the stone circles of the south-west of England. There is no physical evidence to back up his theory that an Earth goddess cult, centred in ancient British cult, in spite of this, his views formed the basis of a film which was a muddled monument to blind assertion. At Stonehenge on misty autumn mornings, ● public shawls are cast from the "shell" stone, thus penetrating to the centre of the monument where its tip outlines the allegedly sacred "Gods'" atrium.

After a full run at this, one could imagine ghosts of gods past haranguing the director for the unsubstantiated allegations. "I want you to listen to me, I'm going to say this to you, I don't have scientific relations with that stone circle," which brings me to The Clifton Complex (BBC2) a condition which one contributor defined as the notion of morality as a function of proximity. In other words, if ● bad thing happens at a distance, portmanteaus isn't so bad after all. Writer-director Mark Lawson made a witty and insightful case to explain the inappreciable: why Bill Clinton is more popular than ever after outtripping the likes in the Oval Office.

At times, like the subject, Lawson couldn't help himself.

"The first crack is wider than all the others: this is the vulva of the monument," Meaden argued unconvincingly. "Inside we reach the first part of stones which are..." (there followed a suitably pregnant pause while Meaden glanced into the *Leans for reassurance*) "...*ungraspable as the cervix staves*, and inside this we have the uterus." One could sympathize with the poor cameraman as a horrible misinterpret, emerged between what Meaden was talking about and what the cameraman thought he was meant to be pointing his camera at. The comparison was a vague presupposition the rubble as the half heartedly cast about for anything vaguely feminine. The effect triggered in some confusion on a pile of old stones. I didn't see a uterus among them but, then again, I suppose I wasn't looking for one.

There was a man wandering idly in an adjacent courtyard.

Channel 5

6.00 Wind in the Willow (F) (25532697) **6.25 Pool** (F) (37029943) **6.30 Dingo Downed From** (F) (43937474) **7.00 Winzies House** (F) (8656127) **7.30 Kitchener** (2296127) **7.35 Haverkort** (F) (5) (8950050) **8.00 George of the Jungle** (F) (220382) **8.30 FILM: Ladies** Adventures of Hehli (Dick Moder, Jack B Hively 1979 US). Dog series call art (851224).

8.50 My Story (6/73/70) **10.20 Sarsel Beach** (S) (7) (78364) **11.10 Leela** (F) (S) (8137011) **12.00 5 New**

3.30 **FILM** *Damn the Torsion!* (Lewis Gilbert 1962 UK) Lolli Nannoleonic swashbuckler, stylishly directed by Dick

5.25 Russell Grent's Postcard (R) (34303769).
5.30 Name That Tune (2000856).
6.00 100 Per Cent (S) (2007789).

6:30 Family Affairs. Stobhan and Holly argue over the photo session. Sade gets Liam away before the police arrive. (S) (T) (2081721)

7:30 Best of Popel. Chart hits with Nail Fox (S) (2087903)

8.00 Storm Warning. More recycled footage of people almost killed by the weather conditions (R) (T) 6523165

6.00 [F]ilm *Beyond the Cell* (Tony Bill, 1998, US). Surprisingly controversial (and well-made) TV movie in which housewife Sissy Spack gets caught up in the fight to save her childhood boyfriend, who is on death row for killing a policeman (T) (38312769).

11.35 **Compromising Situations** (F) (785805).
12.10 **ELIM** Cherry, Narry and Requel (Rus Meyer
Robinson and Anthony Worral Thompson (S) (2527586).

1.30 Live and Dangerous - Review of the Year
(12250528) **4.40 Club Class (F)** (S) (61231783) **5.05**
Movie On Up (F) (S) (19901054) **6.30 100 Per Cent (F)**
(S) (7893290) To Beom.

Figure 1. A schematic diagram of the experimental setup. The subject is seated in a chair, viewing a video screen. The screen displays a target (a small circle) and a starting point (a small circle). The subject's hand is positioned at the starting point. The distance between the starting point and the target is 10 cm. The subject is instructed to move the hand from the starting point to the target. The video screen is 100 cm high and 100 cm wide. The starting point is 50 cm from the bottom edge of the screen. The target is 50 cm from the top edge of the screen. The subject's hand is 50 cm from the bottom edge of the screen. The distance between the starting point and the target is 10 cm. The subject is instructed to move the hand from the starting point to the target.

[illegible]